

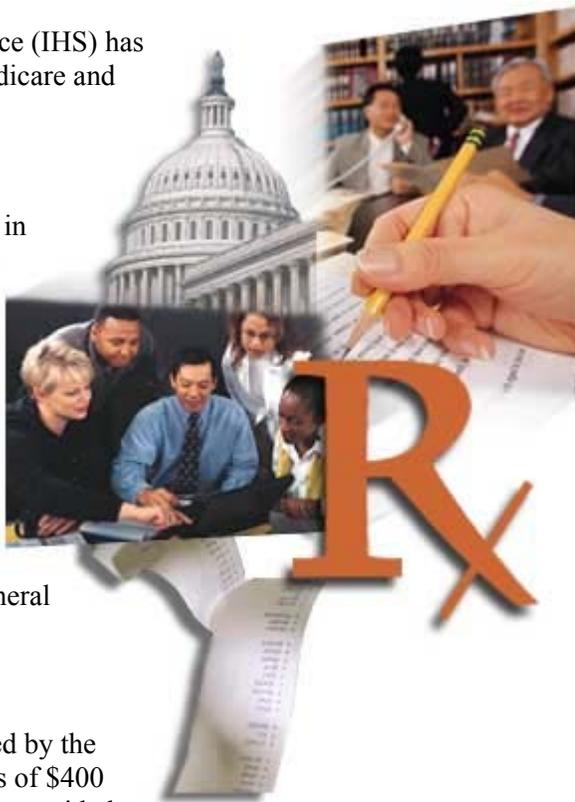
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES

ISSUE

To further the mission of the Agency, the Indian Health Service (IHS) has pursued a close working relationship with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

BACKGROUND

With the passage of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act in 1976, the IHS was given the authority to invoice for services provided to American Indians and Alaska Natives who are beneficiaries of CMS programs. The Congress directed that revenue accruing to the IHS was to be used to ensure the quality of IHS programs through appropriate equipping, staffing, and maintenance of clinical programs and accreditation of services. As a result of this income, all IHS hospitals and most IHS ambulatory care programs are accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Through this process, the IHS ensures a standard of care equal to what is available to the general U.S. population.



SITUATION

As a result of annual rate setting negotiations that are approved by the Office of Management and Budget, the IHS receives in excess of \$400 million (FY 2003 estimate) in revenue from CMS for services provided to Medicaid, Medicare, and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) eligible patients. In recent years the IHS and CMS have met regularly at the senior management level to ensure close coordination of policies, foster increased state/tribal innovation, and develop ways to improve access to care for American Indians and Alaska Natives. The establishment of a IHS/CMS Joint Steering Committee has resulted in adherence to timelines for rate negotiations, improved cost-finding practices, sharing of data, and coordination of payment policies. The IHS has been able to provide assistance to CMS in its efforts to improve communications with tribal and state governments in the implementation of Medicaid, Medicare, and SCHIP, exploring alternative approaches to reimbursement, and informing Indian elders of the programs and services available to the elderly. Recently the IHS and CMS partnership has expanding the CMS satellite network to 57 tribal and IHS health facilities where billing agents can receive CMS sponsored training broadcasts.

OPTIONS/PLANS

To increase service access, the IHS and CMS will continue to pursue alternative payment systems, improved cost-finding capacity, and fostering of more culturally appropriate, non-institutional services for American Indian and Alaska Native beneficiaries.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For referral to the appropriate spokesperson, contact the IHS Public Affairs Staff at 301-443-3593.