



# LTSS in Our Communities

How we can develop Long-Term Services and Supports for our elderly and disabled people

# Presenter



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# VA Health Care on Native Lands



ACCESS TO CARE ON NAVAJO AND HOPI  
NATIONS



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# VA Health Care on Native Lands



# We ask ourselves...



**Why did it take so long for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and Indian Health Service (IHS) to collaborate and provide quality health care to our Veterans?**

**Imagine all the possibilities and differences they would have made long ago.**



# Veterans Affairs & Indian Health Service's Mission to Serve Veterans



**“ To enhance the health of American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) Veterans through the delivery of quality health services using the strengths and expertise of IHS and VA.”**

**~ MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED  
FEBRUARY 23, 2003 BY DEPUTY SECRETARIES OF  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND  
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

# Brief Overview of the IHS/Tribal Health Program (THP) Reimbursement Agreements



**October 01, 2010:** The VA Under Secretary for Health and IHS Director signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

**March – May 2012:** VA, IHS, and THPs initiated tribal consultation on a draft national agreement.

**June 2012:** Confirmed approach – one National Agreement with IHS and individual sharing agreements under 38 USC 8153 for THPs due to their sovereign nature.

**August 24, 2012:** VA Under Secretary for Health signed and distributed the Dear Tribal Leader Letter with program guidance.

**December 05, 2012:** VA/IHS National Agreement signed.

Ongoing coordination and onboarding of THPs.

# Bringing VA Health Care to the Navajo and Hopi Nations



## Why the Navajo and Hopi Nations?

- **Navajo Nation currently has the largest American Indian population surpassing 300,000 members.**
  - As of February 2017, there are currently over 1,600 Veterans enrolled for VA health care benefits with the Northern Arizona VA Health Care System (NAVAHCS). These Veterans reside in the Chinle, Kayenta, Tuba City, and Winslow, AZ areas.
- **Hopi Nation, surrounded entirely by the Navajo Nation, has approximately over 18,000 members.**
  - As of February 2017, there are currently 376 Veterans enrolled for VA health care benefits with the Northern Arizona VA Health Care System (NAVAHCS).

# Bringing VA Health Care to the Navajo and Hopi Nations

## How did it get started?

Veterans advocated for VA hospital/clinic on reservations to their tribal and congressional leadership.

July 2009: Grant approved.

September 2009 - 2010: Met with Chinle Service Unit (Chinle, Tsaile, Pinon).

June 2009: Grant submitted to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC).

August 2009: Establish Navajo Nation and IHS meetings.

# Bringing VA Health Care to the Navajo and Hopi Nations



## How did it get started?

December 2010 –  
March 2011:  
Conducted 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>,  
and 3<sup>rd</sup> Proof of  
Concept Clinics.

July 06, 2012:  
Official Dedication  
of Chinle VA Clinic  
(VA/IHS Veterans  
Outpatient Clinic).

2011 – 2012:  
Deployed Clinical  
Video Telehealth  
(CVT)/Mobile  
Medical Unit (RV).

Ongoing  
collaboration of  
VA/IHS-THP  
Partnership Sites.



# NAVAHCS Sites of Care and their Partnerships



- VA/IHS or THP collaborations all have an Interagency Agreement in place → initial 5 year period, with the option to extend or re-new.
- All VA/IHS or THP sites provide medical care to American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) Veterans, as well as Non-Native Americans.
- NAVAHCS Rural Health key staff meet quarterly with the IHS/THP CEO and Administration staff to address questions, concerns, and work on improvements.

# NAVAHCS Sites of Care



# Current VA Enrollment and Reimbursement Data at each Site of Care



Site	Vets residing in area	Vets Served FY 13- FY 16	FY 13-16 Claims	FY 13-16 Totals	FY 16 Vets Served	FY 16 Totals	FY 15 Vets Served	FY 15 Totals	FY 14 Vets Served	FY 14 Totals	FY 13 Vets Served	FY 13 Totals
Chinle	458	293	3100	\$980,176	168	\$220,985	184	\$369,810	150	\$259,988	71	\$63,774
Kayenta	256	15	189	\$54,843	7	\$7,594.40	5	\$16,830	12	\$29,939	4	\$1,800
Hopi	376	98	1661	\$537,325	48	\$132,232	67	\$180,487	46	\$181,213	0	\$0
Parker	254	45	1046	\$279,675	26	\$52,408	25	\$85,933	34	\$122,215	0	\$0
Peach Spring	36	14	255	\$51,321	8	\$9,301	7	\$22,162	7	\$11,647	0	\$0
Tuba City	428	100	448	\$223,294	67	\$99,257	64	\$115,561	9	\$3,096	0	\$0
Winslow	469	64	457	\$152,699	34	\$37,233	37	\$162,577	0	\$0	0	\$0
Native Crdiology	1800	18	20	\$8,075	5	\$2,384	5	\$2,580	4	\$1,872	0	\$0

***\*NAVAHCS has saved approximately 2 million in travel mileage for Veterans!***

# Types of VA Health Care Services Provided



- VA provides a variety of health care services from basic primary care to nursing home care for eligible Veterans.
- Depending on which site the Veteran receives his/her health care, delivery of care could be via:
  - Face-to-face (F2F)
  - Telemedicine
  - Telephone encounters

*(\*VA Clinics required to have a Registered Nurse and Licensed Practical Nurse staffed at each site)*

# Types of VA Health Care Services Provided

## Services Available:

- Disease Information
- Enrollment and Eligibility
- Health Maintenance
- Health Promotion
- Health Screening
- Electrocardiogram
- Management of Acute and Chronic Diseases
- Mental Health
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Counseling
- Primary Care
- Smoking Cessation
- Procedures, such as:
  - Dressing Changes
  - Immunizations
  - Foley Catheter Replacement and Care
  - Diabetic Foot Exam
  - Cerumen Removal
  - Cryotherapy

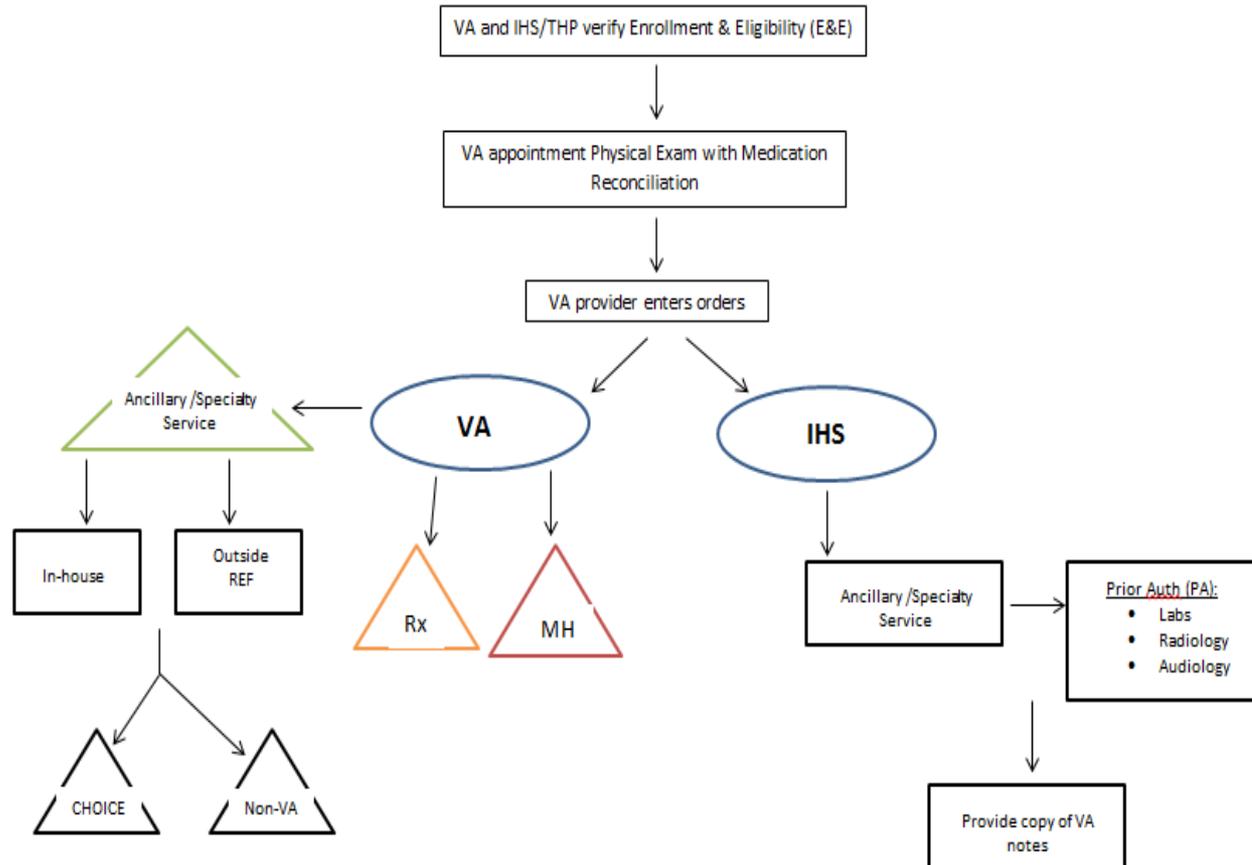
## Ancillary and Other Services Available at IHS/THP facilities:

- Physical Therapy
- Laboratory
- Radiology
- Audiology
- Pharmacy
- General Surgery
- Specialty Care
- Urgent Care
- Emergency Care
- Diabetic Retinal Eye Exam
- Women's Health

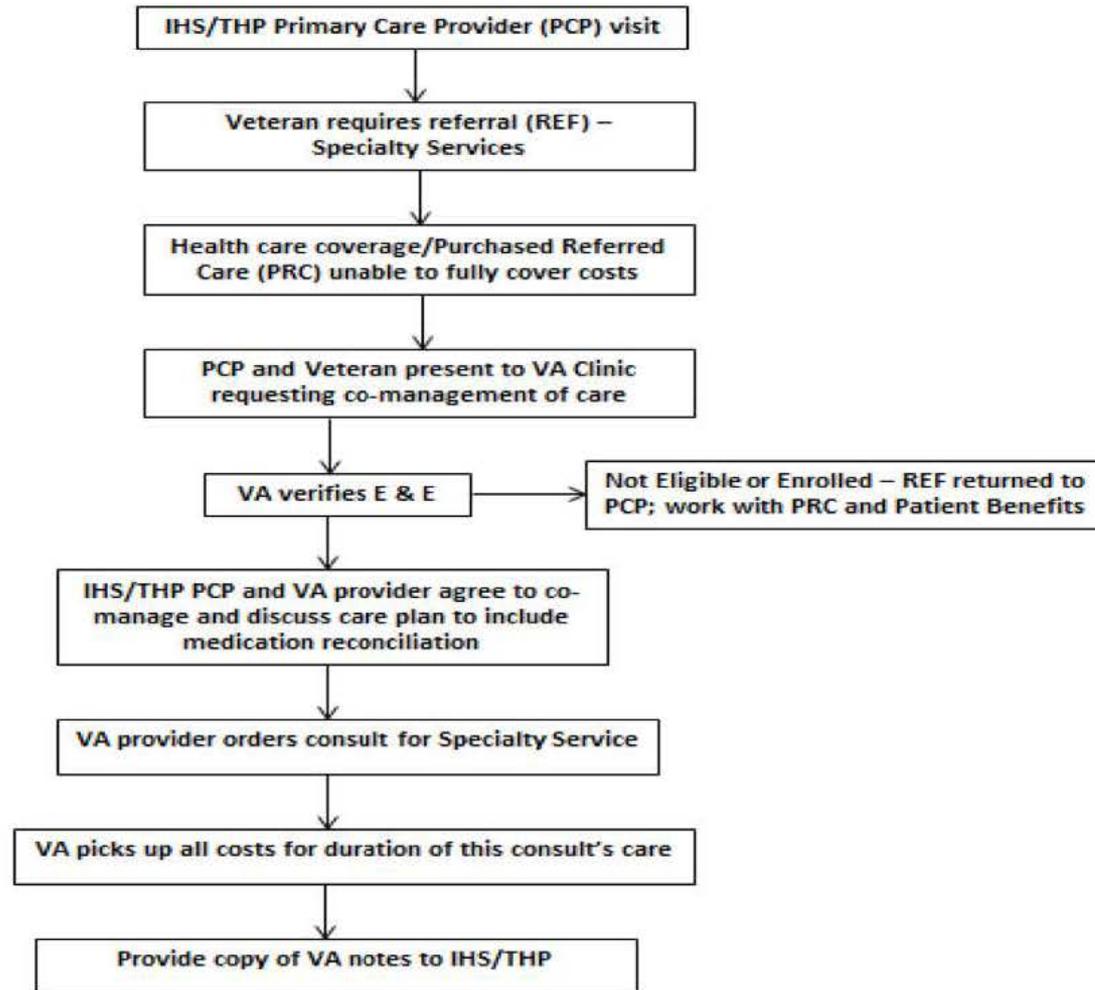
### Delivery of VA Health Care



Veteran presents to VA Clinic requesting VA health care at VA Clinic



Ways that VA and IHS/THP Co-Manage the Veterans Care



# “Why should I enroll for VA health care benefits when I already have free health care with IHS?”



- Access to care closer to home – save on travel expenses.
- Comprehensive VA Health Benefits Package includes inpatient hospital care, outpatient services.
- No enrollment fee, monthly premiums, or deductibles. However, some Veterans may have co-pays for health care and prescription medicine.
- Medicaid eligible? Automatically qualify for VA health care benefits.
- More than 1,200 VA medical facilities – if the Veteran moves or travels, he/she may take their care with them.
- VA health care benefits can be used along with primary/secondary medical insurance, however VA is last payer.
- VA rated service-connected disabilities are treated for free.
- VA Enrollment benefits IHS/THP facility – VA must reimbursement IHS at the all-inclusive Medicare fee rate for services rendered to the Veteran.
- To name a few, VA specializes in PTSD, Military Sexual Trauma, OEF/OIF/OND Transitional Care Management, Homeless Veterans Program, Suicide Prevention, Telicare, Veterans Justice Court, Women’s Veterans Program, Caregiver Support Program, HUD-VASH Program, Home Based Primary Care.

# Challenges the VA Clinics Face



- **Co-pays**
- **Transportation**
- **CHOICE Program bills resulting in collections**
- **Network connectivity**
- **Veterans not sticking with one Primary Care Team/Provider**
- **HIPAA violation concerns**
- **Prefer F2F encounters, not Telemedicine**
- **Mileage reimbursements**
- **Weather conditions**
- **Fail to update demographics**
- **Cell phone connectivity**
- **Delays in Non-VA care consult authorizations, CHOICE referrals**

# Sharing of Medical Records



- **IHS/THP Electronic Health Records (EHR)**
  - All VA health care providers at the IHS/THP-VA partnership sites are fully credentialed with their facility and given access to view, chart, and print medical records, as needed.
  - All Mental Health (MH) records off-limits.
- **VA Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS)**
  - IHS/THP medical providers (selected few) at the IHS/THP partnership sites are also fully credentialed and given access to VIEW ONLY, as needed for continuation of care.
  - All Mental Health (MH) records off-limits.



# Questions and Answers

Type your question into the Q&A box at the bottom right

