

Our Health, Our Community

**Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP Outreach to American Indians/Alaskan
Natives**

Transcript

December 2007

We get healthcare from our local clinic, and we want to make sure they can provide lots of services for us, our kids, and their kids in the future. I wonder if there are other programs that can help families like mine give more care, get the best care.

Thank you so much for taking the time to learn about how we can work together to help improve healthcare in our native communities. Did you know that Medicare, Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, can help bring better healthcare to our people? By signing up for these programs, you can bring more dollars to your healthcare clinic. Talk to your benefits coordinator to sign up today or at your next clinic visit.

"I want my family to have the best medical care available."

"The paperwork that you have to fill out for Medicare is confusing, because a lot of us read, and we don't read the way the white people read it."

"I don't really know what Medicare or Medicaid is. That was a confusion for me."

"Do I even qualify for these kinds of services?"

Our community is more than just where we live. The health of our families and our communities is important to us as Indian people. Our people have survived thousands of years because of our family and community. We honor our elders and treat our families and friends with respect and dignity. Our communities are diverse and unique. Our cultures and our traditions have kept us strong over many years. For the exchange of land, our ancestors were promised healthcare; healthcare that we get mostly through the Indian Health Service and Tribal health facilities.

Congress enacted special laws so that Indian people can get Medicare and Medicaid services at our own Indian health facilities. Enrolling in Medicare and Medicaid brings additional dollars to our hospitals and clinics. This provides more healthcare to our people; both new services and services that improve your quality of care. Better healthcare means stronger families and stronger communities. Medicare and Medicaid are two different programs. Medicare is a federal program that helps care for the elderly and disabled, while Medicaid, is a state run program based on family income that aids or helps those who need healthcare services.

Another program, The State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, provides low cost health insurance for families and children helping you and your family get the services you need. Your state may have its own name for SCHIP, like the All Kids Act in Oklahoma. When you and your family sign up for these programs, you really help your community.

Medicare pays for things like hospital care, diabetes screenings, mammograms, cancer screenings, help with quitting smoking, and much more. Medicaid pays for other services like hospital care, lab, x-ray, transportation, family planning, pediatric care and early health screenings for your child. The State Children's Health Insurance Program also helps you get services for families and children.

Talk to your benefits coordinator about signing up today. Why? Your clinic and hospital can bill Medicare and Medicaid for services provided. When these programs pay for your healthcare, your clinic can provide more services now and in the future. By enrolling, you have greater access to more services, better quality services, and even services that aren't available now. To get these services for you and your family, you have to sign up. Ask your doctor. Ask your benefits coordinator. Talk to the clinic staff today. They can help you understand the program and fill out the forms. You can help by getting others in your family and in your community to sign up too.

One of the reasons that Indian people have been able to survive for thousands of years is because we come from a tradition of sharing. We share what we have. When someone catches a seal or a buffalo or a deer or a caribou or a moose, or gathers food from the land, whether those be berries or corn or rice, we share what we have with the entire community.

By signing up for Medicaid and Medicare, we are doing our part to make sure that every dollar possible comes in to help improve our health of our people. Every dollar that comes in helps to get that elder to healthcare that they might not otherwise be able to get. There aren't enough dollars in our healthcare systems to be able to make sure that we are covering all of our needs. We need your help to make that possible. We need you to be that hunter. We need you to be that gatherer of resources, to be able to make sure that we all can get the healthcare that we are entitled to.

Working together, we can keep our families and our communities healthy and strong. The centers for Medicare and Medicaid services is working with your healthcare provider to help improve healthcare for Indians. Talk to your benefits coordinator about signing up today. It may change your life, the lives of your family and those in your community.

Until we meet again, I will continue to see you as you are in your goodness.