

October 2, 2010

Indian Health Board of Nevada
1325 Airmotive Way, Suite 300
Reno, Nevada 89502

Dear Sir or Madam:

As Chairperson of the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe (the Tribe) I would like to outline some key concerns regarding coverage for medical and dental care through Contract Health Services, utilization patterns, billing issues, and how these key issues have impacted the Tribe and our service population. We are aware that our fellow Tribes may face different issues where reimbursements and CHS budgets are concerned, and where certain common concerns exist—there are variations depending on the Tribe in question. Our hope is that we will be able to identify areas for improvement to avoid budget shortfalls and billing errors that have compromised access to much-needed healthcare.

Our service populations has experienced significant delays in obtaining medically services necessary specialty care for our covered members due to barriers to access at the nearest Indian Health Service facility, Phoenix Indian Medical Center. When possible, we rely on our local referral network; however, there are gaps in this system due to our inability to negotiate contracts with providers who are unwilling to accept Medicare's fee schedule. Due to funding limitations on CHS dollars, we have had to deny treatments and supplies that were deemed to be beneficial and necessary by our contracted providers. In addition, we are unable to meet the dental care needs of our orthodonture candidates, as well as our elders in need of dentures and bridge work. Some of our infirm elders, as well as some younger members, with major medical problems need enhanced medical and social service support that unfortunately we are unable to provide.

Las Vegas Paiute Tribe strongly supports the development of a Nevada Area Office of the Indian Health Service that would allow us to better channel Federal resources to Nevada Natives. In southern Nevada alone, there are an estimated 25,000 Indians who have no IHS services readily available. Further, the exclusions by PIMC have caused hardships to our patients, which is ironic given that the Tribe is part of the Phoenix Area. Extending the Medicare-Like-Rates rule to apply to outpatient services would dramatically alleviate the strain on CHS dollars and severely impact the services to our primary services population.

Please feel free to contact me or our Acting Clinic Director, Andrea Harper, if you have any questions or need further assistance.

Respectfully,

Lucille Campa
Tribal Chairperson
Las Vegas Paiute Tribe