

# VA Office of Tribal Government Relations

## 2018 National Title VI Training & Technical Assistance Conference

August 15, 2018

Marriott Marquis Hotel, Washington DC





# VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations



# VA Organization

## Secretary of Veterans Affairs

### Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)

- Compensation
- Service Connected Disabilities
- Dependents & Survivors Compensation & Pension
- Home Loans – NA Direct Loan
- Education & training
- Vocational rehab & training

### Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

- Hospitals & Clinics
- Health care benefits
- Office of Rural Health (Native domain emphasis & MOU with IHS)
- Office of Community Care – reimbursement agreement VA/IHS
- Geriatrics
- Research programs

### National Cemetery Administration (NCA)

- Memorial benefits - headstone or markers, burial flag.
- Burial Allowance
- Presidential Memorial Certificate
- National Memorials
- Tribal Cemetery Grants (13 Tribal cemeteries)

# VA Organization

## OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Robert Wilkie  
**Secretary**

Jacquelyn Hayes-Byrd  
**Acting Chief of Staff**

John Ulyot  
**Assistant Secretary Office of Public & Intergovernmental Affairs**

Thayer Verschoor  
**Executive Director Intergovernmental Affairs**

Stephanie Birdwell, Director  
**Office of Tribal Government Relations**

**Clay Ward**  
Program Specialist (DC)

**Mary Culey**  
OTGR Specialist  
Southern Plains /  
Southeast Region

**Peter Vicaire**  
OTGR Specialist  
Central / Northeast  
Region

**Terry Bentley**  
OTGR Specialist  
Western Region

**L. HoMana Pawiki**  
OTGR Specialist  
Southwest Region



# VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations

Established the OTGR office in January 2011

- In response to President Clinton's Executive Order 13175 & President Obama's memorandum on Tribal Consultation dated November 5, 2009
- Recognizes the unique Government-to-Government relationship w/tribes
- Strengthen & build closer relations between the VA, tribal governments and other key federal, state, private and non-profit partners & respectfully serve Veterans across Indian Country.



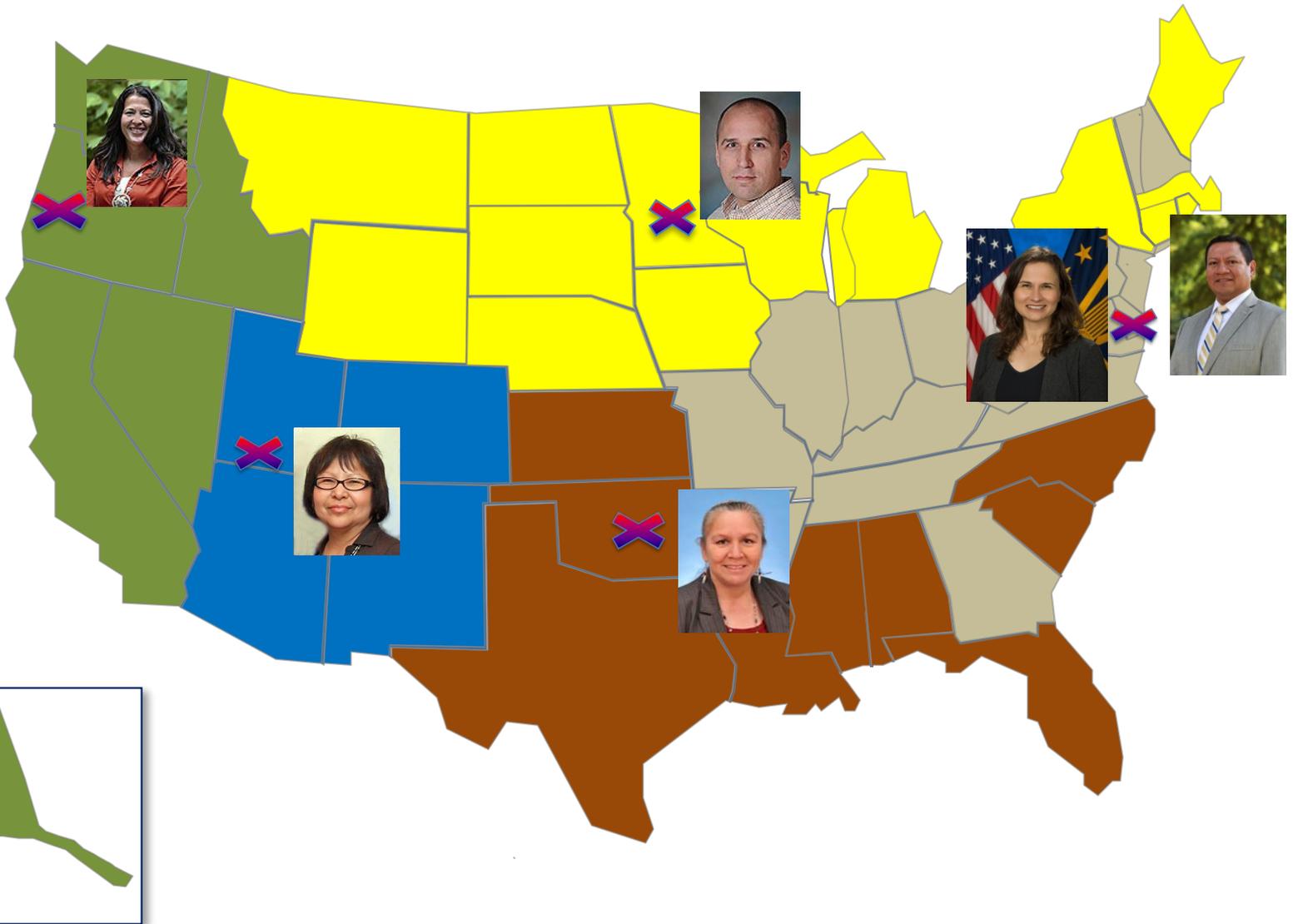
# VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations

- 5 FTEs – Director, PA, 4 Tribal Regional Specialists
- VA's Tribal Consultation Policy completed on February 2011 - First VA consultations occurred in 2012
- OTGR Specialists - Responsible for managing a portfolio of relationships with tribal governments within a specific region & serve as a resource to tribal governments for VA services.





# VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations





# VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations GOALS

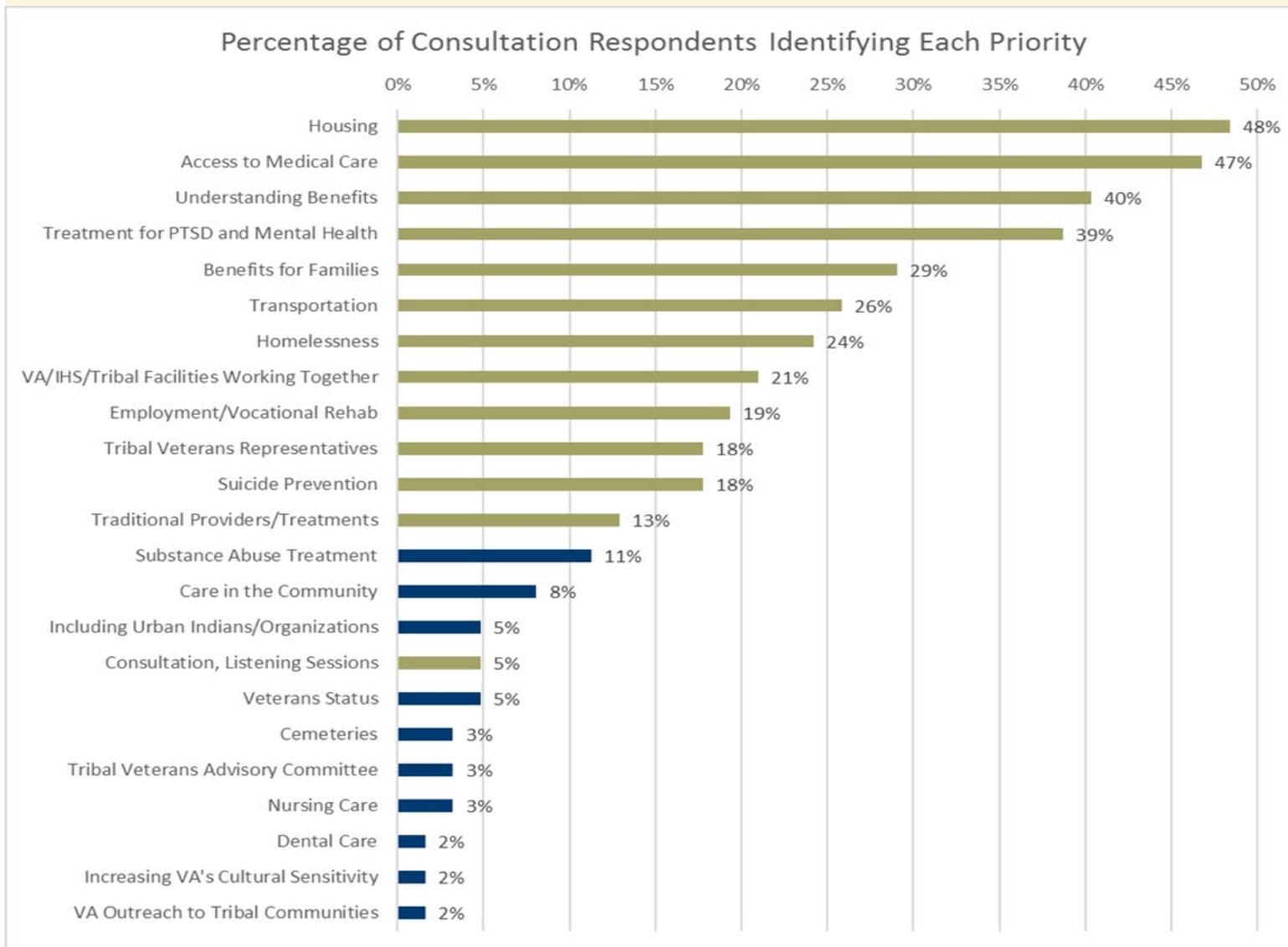
1. Facilitating VA's Tribal Consultation Policy
2. Facilitating increased access to health care & benefits
3. Promoting economic sustainability (opportunities for Veterans to access educational, housing and other special programs & benefits through the VA).





# VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations

## Tribe's Veteran Top Priorities





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<b>Age Group</b>	<b>AI/AN</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Other Races</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>17 to 24 y/o</b>	1,597	1.2	267,951	1.4
<b>25 to 34 y/o</b>	11,830	8.8	1,381,940	7.4
<b>35 to 44 y/o</b>	14,973	11.2	1,707,582	9.1
<b>45 to 54 y/o</b>	23,355	17.4	2,763,361	14.7
<b>55 to 64 y/o</b>	32,206	24.1*	3,381,222	18.0*
<b>65 to 74 y/o</b>	32,117	24.0	4,955,814	26.4
<b>75 years &gt;</b>	17,821	13.3	4,339,626	23.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,899</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>18,797,496</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2015.  
 Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics



# VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations National Update

- VA Secretary Robert Wilkie was confirmed in July 2018
- June 29, 2018: VA-IHS amended the reimbursement agreement through 2022.
- VBA/OTGR Presumptive Campaign in Indian Country – Claims Clinics - 24 tribes participated
- VA/IHS are currently working to amend the MOU
- OTGR completed the 2017 VA/OTGR Executive Summary Report
- Tribal Veteran Summits & Stand Downs throughout Indian Country

# VAIHS Reimbursement Agreement

- October 1, 2010: the VA Under Secretary for Health and the IHS Director signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The VHA Office of Rural Health administers the overall MOU.
- The Indian Health Care Improvement Act authorized agencies to enter into the Reimbursement Agreement on December 5, 2012, **to allow the VA to compensate the IHS financially for direct health care services provided to AI/AN Veterans who are eligible for and enrolled in the VHA health care system.**
- January 12, 2017: VA-IHS National Agreement was extended through June 30, 2019.
- June 29, 2018: VA-IHS amended the agreement through 2022.
- The VHA Office of Community Care administers and facilitates the execution of IHS & Tribal Health Program (THP) agreements.

# Direct Care Services

## VA/IHS/THP Reimbursement Agreements

- **IHS**: 77 Implementation plans signed, for a total of 105 IHS facilities.
- **THP**: Currently 111 signed agreements, with 40 tribes in progress.
- VA has reimbursed over **\$74 million** for direct care services provided by IHS & THPs covering over **9,400** eligible AI/AN Veterans.

# Benefits Resulting from IHS/THP Agreements

- Promotes quality health care through collaborative relationships and agreements.
- Focuses on increasing care coordination, collaboration, and resource-sharing for eligible AI/AN Veterans.
- Provides eligible AI/AN Veterans with access to care closer to their homes in a culturally sensitive environment.



# Building Partnerships to Connect Native Veterans to Care and Benefits

## VBA/OTGR Presumptive Campaign

- **“Your Service. Our Mission: Bringing VA Benefits Home”**
- **Coordinated effort with VBA, VA Reg Offices, State Dept of VA, VSOs, Tribal Veterans Depts, IHS/THPs**
- **24 Tribes participated & 30+ Claims Clinic events in Indian Country**
  - Kewa Pueblo
  - Pasqui Yaqui Tribe
  - Tohono O'odham Nation
  - Pueblo of Pojoaque
  - Taos Pueblo
  - Copper River Native Assoc. (AK)
  - Native Village of White Mtn (AK)
  - Tule River Tribe California
  - Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
  - Siletz Tribe
  - Nooksack Indian Tribe
  - Nooksack Indian Tribe
  - Pasqui Yaqui Tribe
  - Nez Perce Tribe
  - Osage Nation
  - Seminole Nation of OK
  - Eastern Shawnee Tribe
  - Choctaw Nation of OK
  - Kiowa Tribe of OK
  - Bay Mills Indian Community
  - Navajo Nation
  - San Carlos Apache
  - White Earth Nation
  - Walker River Paiute Tribe

# Building Partnerships to Connect Native Veterans to Care and Benefits

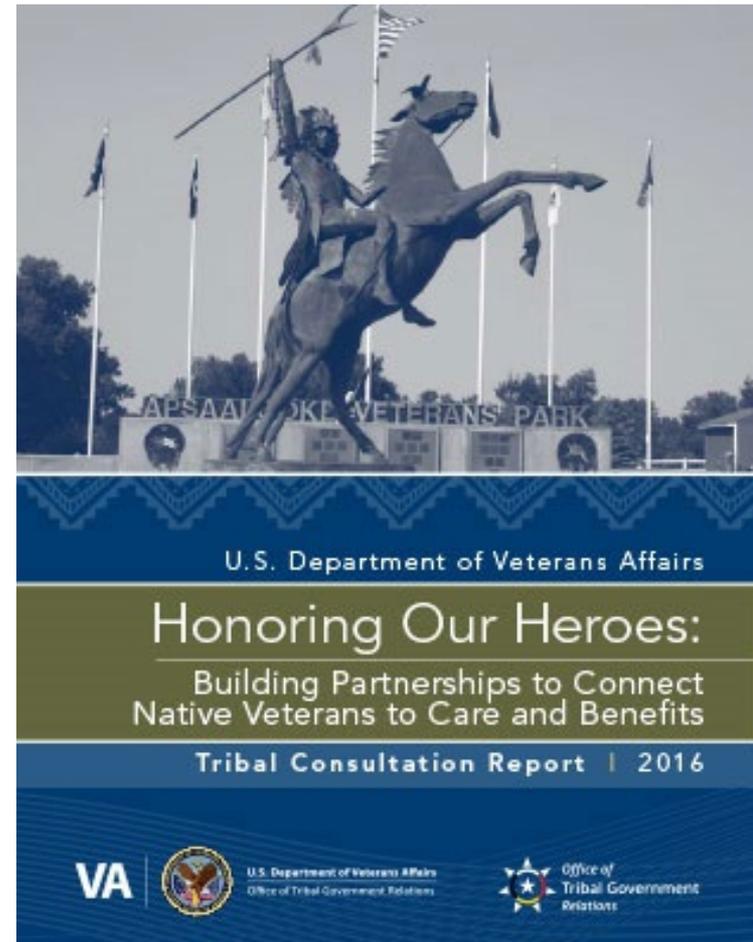
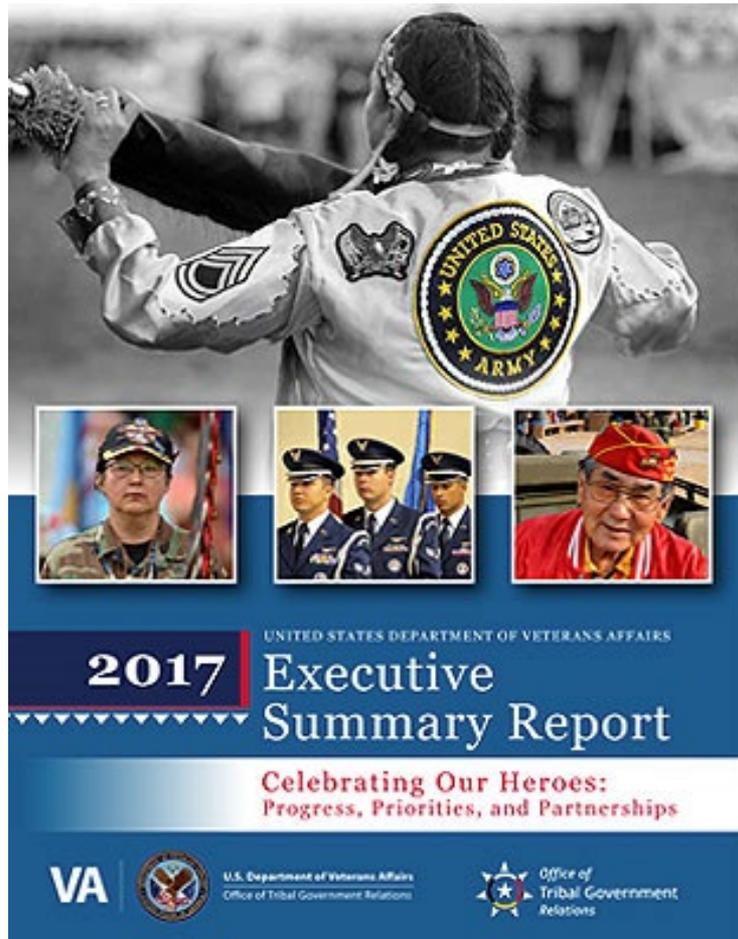
- Establish local working relationships with VA leadership, public affairs staff (every VA has a Public Affairs Officer), outreach staff and program staff.
- Recommend establishing contact with Veterans Benefits Administration leadership/staff and National Cemetery Administration.
- Recommend establishing contact with the State Department of Veterans Affairs contacts and local Veteran Service Organizations. These contacts will aid in care coordination on behalf of the Veteran population.
- Know how many Veterans are enrolled in VHA health care. Work with the local VHA to hold Veterans outreach events, enrollment fairs.
- Work with local State Departments of Veterans Affairs, Veteran Service Organizations to hold Veterans benefits fairs.

# Where to begin with VA – establishing local working relationships that enhance care & benefits to Veterans

- Reach out to VA Office of Tribal Government Relations staff they can assist with scheduling meetings or even come on site to provide help with linking your facility leadership to local VA partners.  
<https://www.va.gov/TRIBALGOVERNMENT/contact.asp>
- Developing local relationships, contacts and collaborative partnerships can significantly enhance the Veteran experience, benefits and care, and we strongly encourage cultivating these local relationships. Our VA OTGR team are ready and willing to help.

# 2017 Executive Summary Report & Tribal Consultation Report

Available on OTGR website: [www.va.gov/tribalgovernment](http://www.va.gov/tribalgovernment)





VA ~ Office of Tribal Government Relations

## Contact Info

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