

WHAT IS INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES?

Indian Health Services (IHS) is a combination of tribal, federal, and contract health service facilities that provide general and emergency medical care for eligible Indians.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES?

To be eligible, a person must be:

1. A person of Indian descent;
2. A non-Indian woman pregnant with an eligible Indian's child (but only during the pregnancy and about 6 weeks after delivery); or
3. Non-Indian members of an eligible Indian's household if the medical officer in charge determines this is necessary to control acute infectious disease or a public health hazard.

WHAT IS "INDIAN DESCENT"?

A person must meet at least one of the following:

1. Be regarded by the community to be Indian or Alaska Native;
2. Be an enrolled member of an Indian or Alaska Native Tribe;
3. Reside on tax-exempt land or live on restricted property;
4. Actively participates in Tribal affairs; or
5. Any other reasonable factor indicative of Indian descent.

HOW TO APPLY FOR INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

To apply for IHS services, go to the IHS facility nearest you and present your tribal enrollment card or your Beneficiary Identification Card. You will have to provide some personal information and fill out some forms. At that time, IHS will inform you of your rights and what specific services, if any, you are eligible to receive.

DIRECT SERVICES

IHS has an "open door" policy in which all Indian descendants should be provided **direct health care** at their clinics and hospitals. Indians who are not members of the tribe where the IHS facility is located should still be provided direct services.

Also, there currently is no requirement for patients to apply for an Alternate Resource when receiving direct care services from a clinic.

PRIORITIES WHEN RESOURCES ARE INSUFFICIENT

The program may prioritize care and treatment among individuals. Priorities may be based on medical need and access to other medical care.

CONTRACT HEALTH SERVICES ("CHS")

A person may need medical care beyond what the local IHS clinic can provide. In this case, the person may request "contract health services" or CHS, where IHS may pay for services provided by a non-IHS provider. Referrals are not a guarantee for payment by IHS.

Indians eligible for direct care are not automatically eligible for CHS. In order to qualify for contract health services, the patient must meet the **residency, notification, medical priority, and alternate resources requirements**.

The **residency** requirements require that you either live on the reservation or live in the county of the



Contract Health Service Delivery Area for your tribe. If you do not live on the reservation you must be a member of the tribe located on the reservation or maintain close economic and social ties with that tribe.

The **notification** requirements require you to get prior approval for each case or give notice within 72 hours for emergency cases.

Payment may then be approved if the health care service that you need is "**medically necessary**," the service is not accessible at IHS or tribal facility, and the facility's CHS committee determines that your case is within the current medical priorities of the facility.

If CHS funds are insufficient to pay for all needed services the committee considers each individual's medical condition to rank cases in medical priority. Thus, each visit to a contract health services provider is distinct and must be examined individually to determine eligibility.

Lastly, you must apply for any **alternate resources** for which you may be eligible, such as Medicare, Medicaid, insurance, etc.

A contract health services program cannot establish a cap on certain procedures, such as dental procedures, or eyeglasses. If a health service is within medical priorities, CHS must pay for the full amount of the service.

CHS also applies to non-Indian children if they are the natural, adopted, step-child, foster child, legal ward, or orphan of an eligible Indian.

THE RIGHT TO APPEAL DENIALS OF INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES

If IHS denies your application for health services it must notify you of that denial in writing.

For CHS, the written denial must contain a statement of all of the reasons for the denial. The notice shall advise the applicant for CHS that he or she may file for reconsideration or appeal within **30 days of receipt of the notice**.

Reconsideration is appropriate when new documentation is submitted; otherwise, the applicant may appeal the denial to the Service Unit Director.

A request for reconsideration or appeal shall be in writing and shall set forth the grounds supporting the request or appeal. If the original or reconsidered decision is affirmed on appeal by the Area or Program Director, the applicant shall be notified in writing and advised that further appeal may be taken to the Director of the Indian Health Service within **30 days of receipt of the notice**.

PATIENT RIGHTS AND GRIEVANCES

Each Indian Health service Area is required to develop and promulgate a written statement of patient rights. Each Service Area also must have a designated grievance committee to handle patient grievances. Appeals will go to the Service Unit Director, who must initiate an investigation and provide a written reply within specified periods of time. Unresolved complaints may then be appealed to the Area Health Board or the Area Director. Written explanations of the grievance process and patient rights must be posted prominently in the waiting areas, periodically distributed to the community, and included in the orientation process for all new IHS staff.

**INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE UNITS
AND
HEALTH CARE FACILITIES IN NEVADA**

Elko Health Center
515 Shoshone Circle
Elko, NV 89801
775-738-2252

Ely Shoshone Tribe
Newe Medical Clinic
400 A Newe View
Ely, NV 89301
775-289-2134

Duckwater Health Station
511 Duckwater Falls Road
Duckwater, NV 89314
775-863-0222

Fallon Tribal Health Clinic
1001 Rio Vista Drive
PO Box 1980
Fallon, NV 89406
775-423-3634 ext. 223

Fort McDermitt Health Station
112 North Reservation Road
PO Box 457
McDermitt, NV 89421
775-532-8522

Owyhee Community Health Facility
US PHS Nevada Hwy 225
PO Box 130
Owyhee, NV 89832
775-757-2415
800-642-6999

Pyramid Lake Tribal Health Clinic
705 Hwy 446
PO Box 227
Nixon, NV 89424
775-574-1018

Reno Sparks Tribal Health Clinic
1715 Keunzli Street
Reno, NV 89502
775-329-5162

Schurz Service Unit
Schurz Indian Health Center
Drawer A
Schurz, Nevada 89427
775-773-2345

Walker River Tribal Health Clinic
1025 Hospital Road
PO Drawer C
Schurz, NV 89427
775-773-2345

Washoe Tribal Health Center
1559 Watasheamu Road
Gardnerville, NV 89460
775-265-4215

Yerington Tribal Health Clinic
171 Campbell Lane
Yerington, NV 89447
775-463-3335 / 775-883-3895



If you feel you have been wrongly denied Indian Health Service benefits you may contact:

Nevada Legal Services, Inc.
204 Marsh Avenue, Suite 101
Reno, NV 89509
775-284-3491

Toll-free within Nevada 800-323-8666
Fax 775-284-3497
www.nlslaw.net

PLEASE NOTE: This publication provides general information. It is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.

**Laws are subject to change.
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