

VA - Indian Health Service/Tribal Health Program/ Urban Indian Organization (I/T/U) Healthcare Reimbursement Agreement Program (RAP)

October 2023

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Integrated Veteran Care

I/T/U Reimbursement Agreements Program

The VA Reimbursement Agreement Program (RAP) with the Indian Health Service/Tribal Health Programs/Urban Indian Organizations (I/T/U) provides **a means for I/T/U health care facilities to receive reimbursement from VA for healthcare services provided to eligible American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Veterans** and pre-authorized non-AI/AN Veteran (only for Alaska).

Do **not** require VA preauthorization

Are **not** subject to VA Copay

Key Milestones

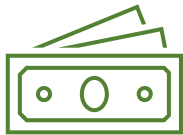
- 2010 - VA and IHS signed an agency level Memorandum of Understanding signed in 10/ 2010 to improve access to care and care coordination
- Summer 2012 - VA signed Reimbursement Agreements with 26 Alaska THPs.
- December 2012 - The National VA-IHS Reimbursement Agreement signed and individual THPs began execution for Direct Care Services
- Sept. 2020 – Agreement modified to extended until **June 30, 2024**, as well as reimbursing for telehealth and COVID-19 related PRC
- August 2023 – Negotiating new IHS and THP Agreement issued to include PRC and Contract Travel

Overview of the VA RAP

Since 2012, VA has administered the [Reimbursement Agreement Program \(RAP\)](#)



As of September 2023, **120 THP**, **74 IHS**, and **4 UIO** facilities participate in the VA RAP



During FY22, VA spent \$34 million in reimbursements through the Sharing Agreements across all IHS/THP/UIOs

~\$23 million reimbursed care for Native Veterans

~\$11 million paid care for Non-Native Veterans in Alaska

USET SPF - Participating VA Reimbursement Agreement

10 USET SPF Participating in the VA Reimbursement Agreement:

1. Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
2. Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
3. Seminole Tribe of Florida
4. Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana
5. Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe
6. Passamaquoddy Tribe – Pleasant Point
7. Passamaquoddy Tribe – Indian Township
8. Oneida Indian Nation
9. Catawba Indian Nation
10. Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

USET SF Participating – I/T/U Facility Reimbursement

2022

IHS/THP Facility	Reimbursement Amount	# Unique Veterans
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (THP)	\$1,038.00	2
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (THP)	\$38,456	13
Catawba Service Unit (IHS)	\$625	1

2023

IHS/THP Facility	Reimbursement Amount	# Unique Veterans
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (THP)	\$23,333.00	10
Catawba Service Unit (IHS)	\$625	1

Key Benefits

Benefit

Collaboration - Promotes resource sharing through collaborative relationships both inter-governmental by sharing resources and with the community.

Choice of Provider - Eligible AI/AN Veterans can choose to receive their health care from an I/T/U facility in a culturally sensitive environment, often closer to their home.

No Prior Authorization - I/T/U facilities that are providing direct care services Eligible AI/AN Veteran does not require VA- preauthorization to receive reimbursement from the VA.

No Copayment - VA copayments do not apply to direct care services delivered by the I/T/U healthcare facility to eligible AI/AN Veterans under agreements with VA. (Pursuant to section 405(c) of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA))

Pharmacy Benefit - Facilities will be reimbursed for outpatient medications dispensed by the facility that are on the VA's formulary. This is not limited to emergent prescriptions

No Outstanding Balances – I/T/U medical facilities must bill the Veteran's Other Health Insurance (OHI) *prior* to billing VA. VA is only responsible for the balance remaining after OHI reimbursements (except for Federal payers, e.g., Medicare/Medicaid, which consider their payments in full). For Alaska, VA can be the primary payer, but VA payments are considered payment in full, they cannot bill both.

I/T/U Reimbursement Agreements Versus Other MOUs

Sharing Agreements are the authority to enter the relationship

- Do not relate to existing Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) or sharing agreements.
- Separate program from VA's Office of Community Care.
 - Community Care Network (CCN)
 - Veteran Care Agreement (VCA)
- Program managed by the Office of Integrated Veteran Care (IVC) but agreements are locally established.

Veterans are seeking
Tribal Care not VA Care

Program Requirements

AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Reimbursement Agreement – Executed with VA and THP/UIO designated representative signature. IHS is signed Nationally.
- ❖ I/T/U Implementation Plan and Required Documents

VETERAN ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Native Status – eligible for services from IHS/THP/UIO in accordance with 42 CFR part 136
- ❖ VA Status - Eligible for VA services provided under 38 CFR 17.38 the Medical Benefits Package.
 - Generally, Veterans must be enrolled in the VA Healthcare System as a condition to reimbursement*

Billing Requirements

- ❖ Timely filing – submit ITU claims to VA within 1 year of the date of service
- ❖ Use CMS guidelines for submitting Outpatient and Inpatient claims.
- ❖ Use of EDI Preferred

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Scope of Services

VA only reimburses for **Direct Care Services**

Direct Care Services: any health service that is provided directly by I/T/U healthcare facilities

RAP Team is currently working to include **Purchased Referred Care and Contracted Travel:** care provided outside of an I/T/U healthcare facility

Generally, VA will reimburse for services that are part of the [VA Medical Benefits package](#) such as:

- ✓ Outpatient, inpatient hospital, surgical, and mental healthcare, including care for substance abuse
- ✓ Outpatient prescription pharmaceutical drugs (under VA's formulary)
- ✓ Emergency care (Direct Care)
- ✓ Telehealth

For full details: [Medical Benefits Package Exclusions - Health Benefits \(va.gov\)](#)



Scope of Services - expansion

- Currently working to include Purchased Referred Care
 - IHS draft with IHS
 - THP – listening session on 2nd draft held Monday 6/26 as part of the Tribal Self Governance Conference
 - Send written comments to tribal.agreements@va.gov.

I/T/U RAP Payment Rates

Outpatient Services	IHS All Inclusive Rate published in the Federal Register for IHS/THP facilities and Medicare rates for UIO facilities
Inpatient Hospital Services	Lower 48: Medicare rates Alaska THP: IHS All Inclusive Rate Inpatient Hospital Per Diem (excludes Physician/Practitioners Services)
Critical Access Hospitals	Medicare rates
Ambulatory Surgical Services	Medicare rates
Outpatient Pharmacy	Lower 48 THP and IHS: Actual cost for IHS/THP facilities Alaska THP and Lower 48 UIO: Wholesale Acquisition Cost (WAC) plus dispensing fee

How To Participate

1. Interest Communication

- THP/UIO expresses by emailing tribal.agreements@va.gov
- VA will reply with some program information and if the tribe is still interested, schedule an informative onboarding meeting.

2. Onboarding Meeting

- THP/UIO attends an onboarding meeting with I/T/U RAP to review key program requirements and review document requirements.

3. Complete Necessary Paperwork

- I/T/Us complete and submit the agreement, implementation plan, required documents, and attends VA eligibility training.

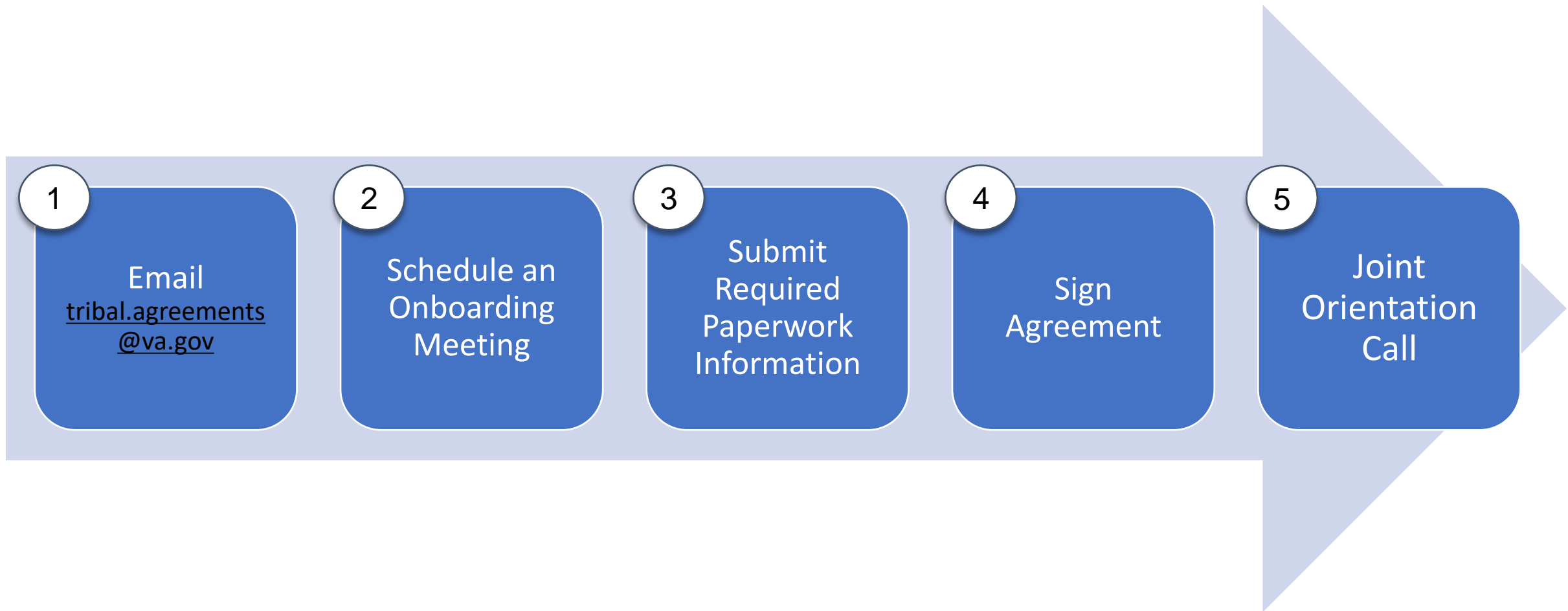
4. Finalize Agreement

- VA Program office obtains signed agreement from the THP/UIO and VA CO signs and executes. I/T/U will receive notice to start billing VA

5. Joint Orientation

- I/T/U and local VA representative attends a *Joint Orientation training* to meet their local contacts and review low level operational details and the Provider Guide.

Initiating a Reimbursement Agreement



Visit the [VA website](#) for more detailed information

Resources and Contact Information

- Website:
https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/info_IHS-THP.asp
- Video: <https://youtu.be/8MzDeO3OQtg>
- Provider guide – contains specific operational details

To talk to someone in VA's RAP:
tribal.agreements@va.gov

Participating facilities with payment questions:
vha_104p_ops_western_region_nw_ihs_thp_support@va.gov

The screenshot shows the VA website's 'Community Care' page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the VA logo, 'U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs', a search bar, and a 'Sign in' button. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'VA Benefits and Health Care', 'About VA', and 'Find a VA Location'. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: 'VA > Health Care > Community Care > IHS/THP Reimbursement Agreements Program—Information for Providers'. The page title is 'Community Care'. A left sidebar contains a menu with items like 'Community Care Home', 'Veteran Care', 'Family Member Care', 'For Caregivers', 'For Providers', 'For Payers', 'Publications', 'About VHA OCC', 'Site Map', and 'More Health Care'. The main content area features a heading 'IHS/THP Reimbursement Agreements Program—Information for Providers' followed by a paragraph explaining the program. To the right, there is a video player with a play button and a title 'Veteran Community Care: Indian...'. Below the video, there is a section titled 'Listed below are several resources for initiating agreements and implementing the reimbursement agreement.' followed by a grid of buttons: 'Eligibility and Enrollment Verification', 'IHS/THP Initiation and Implementation', 'Submitting Claims', 'Claims Status Check', 'Care Coordination', 'Training', 'Operational Updates', and 'Contacts & Resources'.

Questions



Contact: tribal.agreements@va.gov