

Department of Veterans Affairs Announces Revised Urban Indian Organization Reimbursement Agreement Program Template, Broadens Scope of Services

Category: Policy Blog

written by Alex Sampson | August 19, 2024

On July 11, 2024, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published a [Dear Facility Leader letter](#) announcing implementation of the [revised VA-Urban Indian Organization \(UIO\) Reimbursement Agreement Program \(RAP\) template](#) (hereinafter “revised agreement”). VA states that the revised agreement contains several key improvements designed to expand the scope of reimbursements and honors the unique capabilities and traditions of American Indian and Alaska Native Health Programs, including reducing duplicative terms, expanding timely filing to 36 months, and broadening the scope of services. For example, the revised agreement explicitly includes reimbursements for durable medical equipment (DME), prosthetics/orthotics and supplies, and home health services, while no longer explicitly excluding reimbursement for residential treatment. It also now includes dental services under “Reimbursement Rates for Direct Care Services.”

Background

The [VA Indian Health Service \(IHS\)/Tribal Health Program \(THP\)/UIO RAP](#) provides VA reimbursement to IHS, THP, and UIO health facilities for services provided to eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans. The agreements program was first initiated in 2012 for IHS and Tribal health facilities. It was expanded in 2022 to include UIOs. The RAP is part of a larger effort to improve access to care and coordination for American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans under a broader [VA-IHS Memorandum of Understanding](#) managed by [Veterans Health Administration](#) (VHA). On May 1, 2024, VA hosted an [Urban Confer](#) regarding the revised template for the VA-UIO RAP template.

NCUIH’s Actions

NCUIH [submitted comments on May 15, 2024](#), in response to the May 1, 2024, Urban Confer. In its comments, NCUIH recommended that VA continue to engage with and provide updates to UIOs on the revised agreement through its development; improve the UIO reimbursement rates under the revised agreement; ensure changes to the scope of services include services provided at UIOs; and provide technical assistance to UIOs to support UIO participation. NCUIH also previously submitted comments to VA in February 2022, requesting VA improve VA’s urban confer process and continue to improve VA’s relationship with UIOs.

NCUIH will continue to monitor developments regarding the RAP.