

VA Office of Tribal Government Relations

National Indian Health Board Tribal Health Conference

September 18, 2018



VA Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR)

Established office in January 2011

- In response to President Clinton's Executive Order 13175 and President Obama's memorandum on Tribal Consultation dated November 5, 2009
- Recognizes unique Government-to-Government relationship with tribes
- 5 FTEE – Director, Program Analyst, 4 Regional Specialists

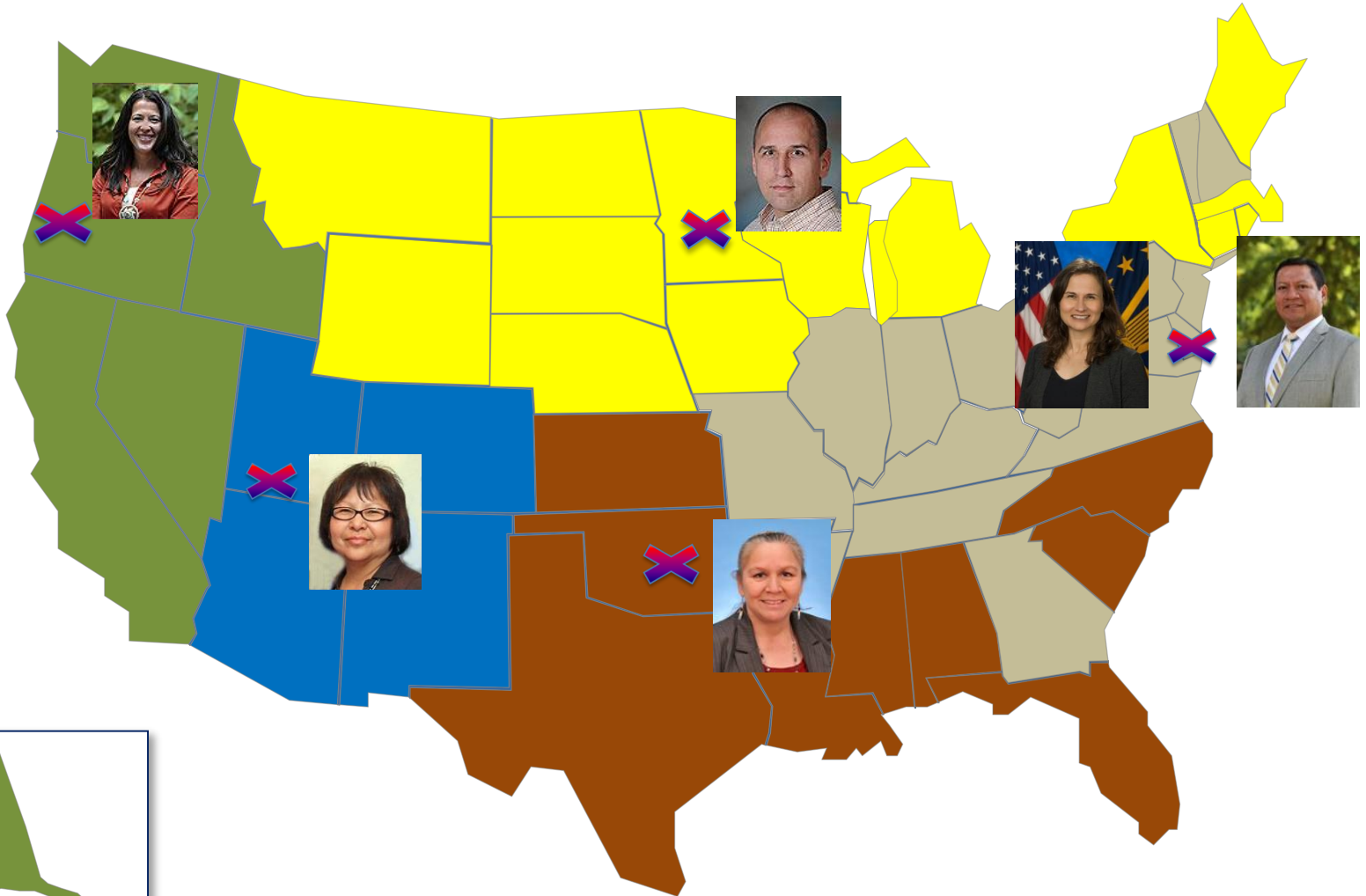
VA's Tribal Consultation Policy completed on February 2011

- First VA consultations occurred in 2012
- Most recent in August 2018

OTGR Specialists hired August/September 2011

- 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 (OTGR)



VA Organization

OFFICE OF TRIBAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Robert Wilkie
Secretary

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Chief of Staff of VA

John Ulliot
Assistant Secretary Office of Public & Intergovernmental Affairs

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Mary Culley
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Southeast Region

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OTGR Specialist
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Region

Terry Bentley
OTGR Specialist
Western Region

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OTGR Specialist
Southwest Region

American Indian/Alaska Native Service Members and Veterans

- American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans have played a vital role in the U.S. military for over 200 years.
- **Native Americans serve at a higher rate when compared to other races**
- Approximately 134,000 Veterans, comprising of 0.7% of almost 19 million Veterans – this is important to note because there is less than 1.0% AIAN race

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2015.

Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics.

<https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/AIANReport2015.pdf>

Challenges Facing American Indian/Alaska Native Veterans

- Three times more highly rural than non-Native Veterans
- Younger as a cohort than all other Service Members and Veterans
- More female Veterans serve than non-Native
- Lower Income levels and educational levels
- Higher degree of combat service - more service connected Veterans than other non-Native counterparts

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2015.
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<https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/AIANReport2015.pdf>



VA OTGR – 3 MAIN GOALS

Goal 1: Implement VA's Tribal Consultation Policy

- Top priorities for serving Veterans in Indian Country
- Accreditation of Tribal Veterans Service Offices
- A proposed consolidation of non-VA care into a more standardized system under the Choice Act



VA OTGR – 3 MAIN GOALS

Goal 2: Facilitate Increased Access to Health Care & Benefits

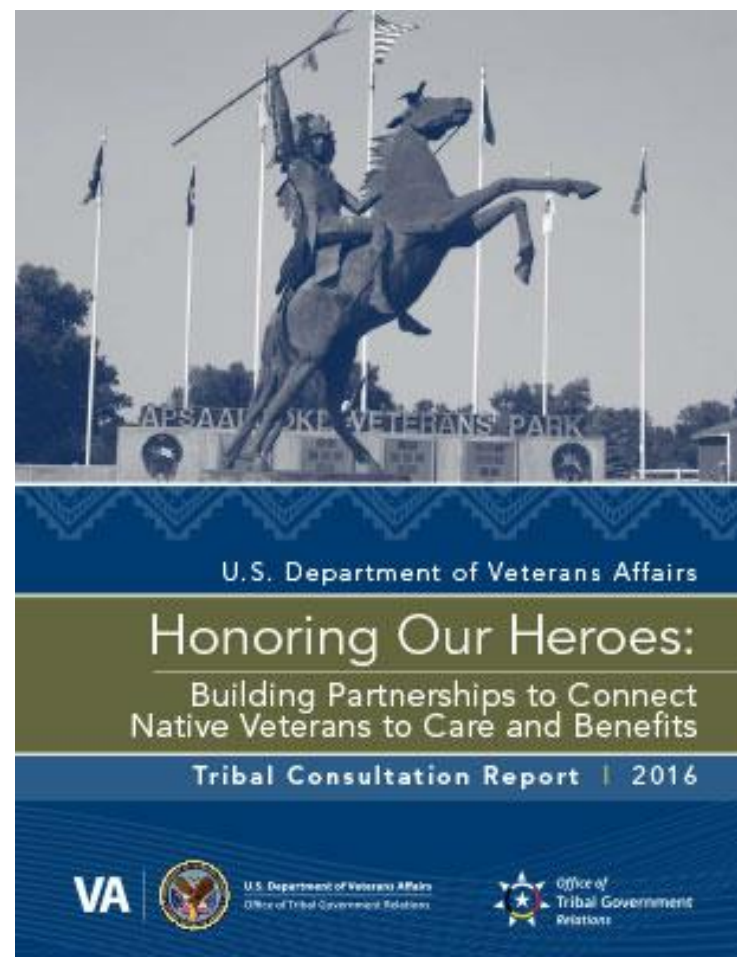
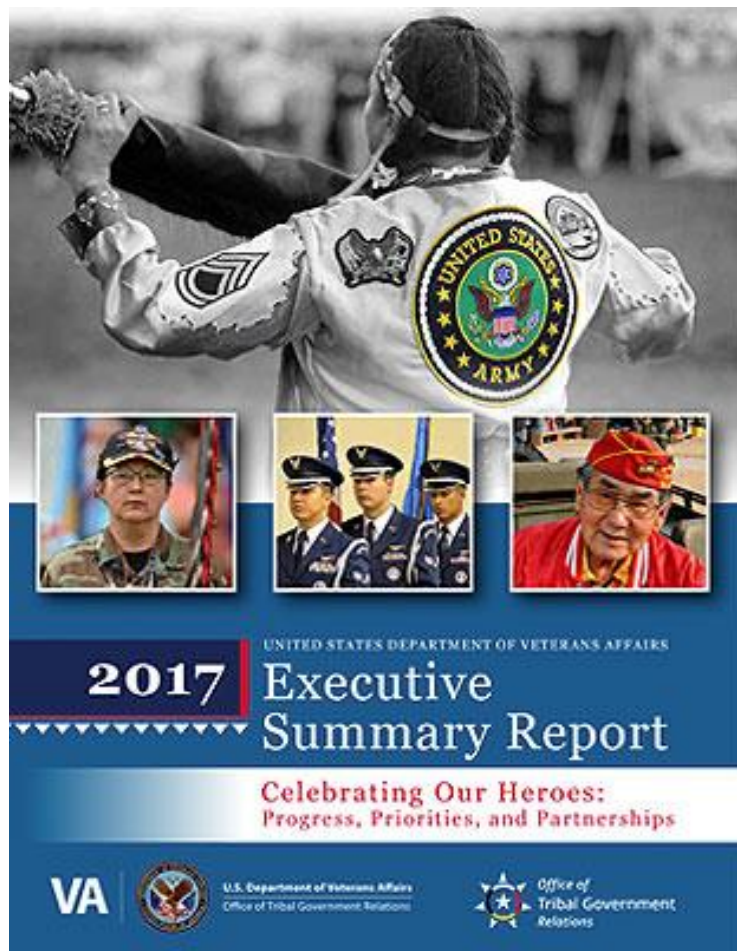
- Through VA Healthcare Facilities & Vet Centers
- Through Veterans Benefits Administration and National Cemetery Administration
- Through Indian Health Service Facilities & Tribal Health Programs

Goal 3: Promote Economic Sustainability

- Through utilization of GI Bill benefits for education
- Connecting Veterans to job training and job opportunities
- Awareness of federal contract opportunities for Veteran-Owned Small Business
- Expand knowledge and use of the Native American Direct Loan Program for VA home loans on trust lands

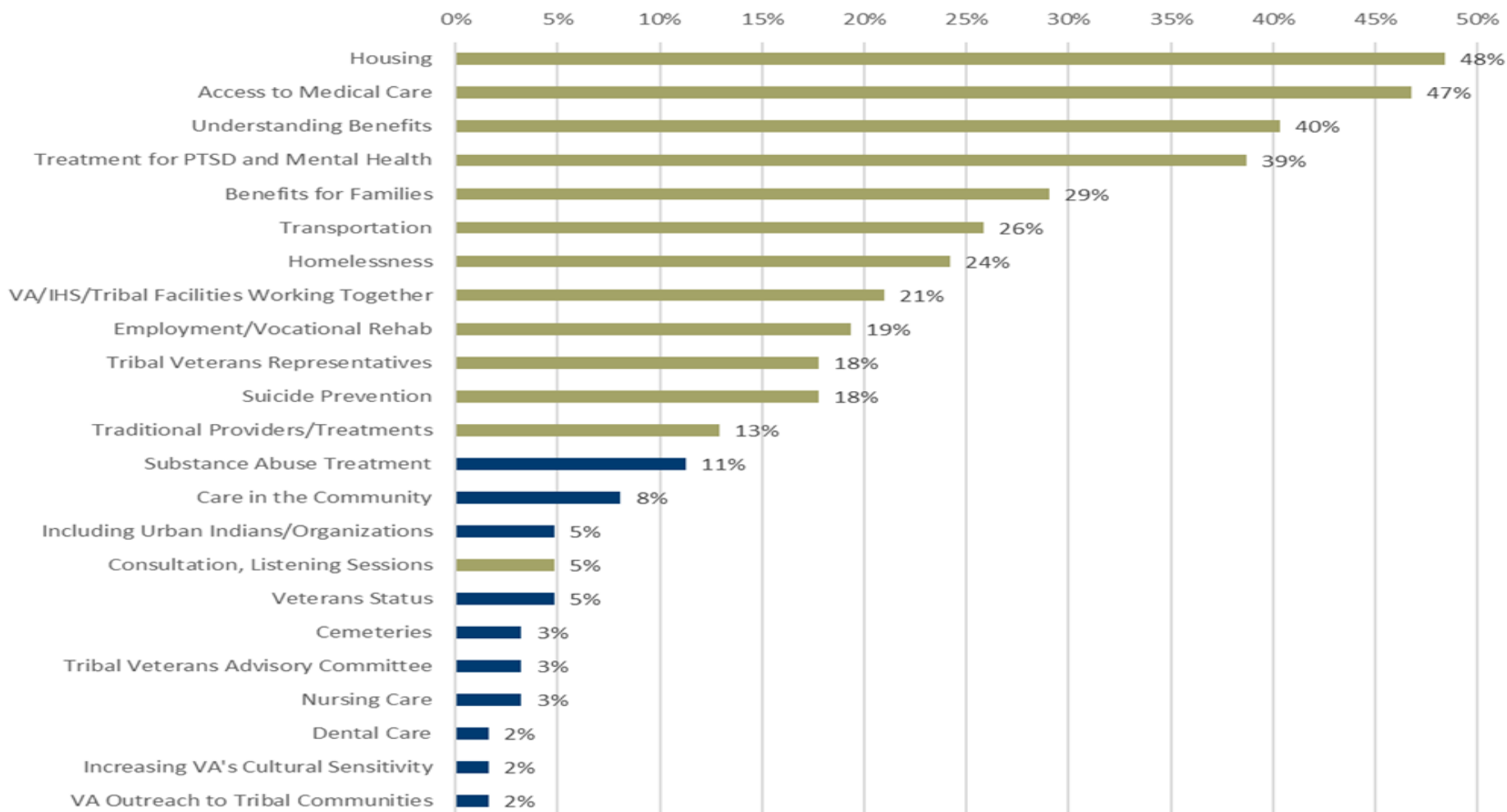
Connecting Tribes and VA

OTGR Goal 1: Implement Tribal Consultation Policy



Top Priorities in Indian Country

Percentage of Consultation Respondents Identifying Each Priority



Connecting Tribes to Goals

OTGR Goal 2: Facilitate Increased Access to Health Care & Benefits

- OTGR works closely with tribes to implement the VA, Indian Health Service and Tribal Health Programs Reimbursement Agreements. VA reimburses IHS and THP programs for direct care services provided to eligible American Indians and Alaska Native Veterans. These agreements increase access to care for American Indians and Alaska Native Veterans nationwide, in particular those highly rural Veterans living within Indian Country.



Connecting Tribes to Goals

OTGR Goal 2: Facilitate Increased Access to Health Care & Benefits (Continued)

- Listed below are the current agreements and reimbursement amounts:

NATIONWIDE:

83 IHS agreements at 108 IHS sites

111 Tribal Health Programs (THP)

\$80 Million Reimbursed (from FY12 to FY18)

9,600 Unique Veterans served (from FY12 to FY18)

Connecting Tribes to Goals

OTGR Goal 3: **Promote Economic Sustainability**

- OTGR partnered with VBA Benefits Assistance Service in FY18 for a nationwide campaign to Indian Country:
- *“Your Service. Our Mission: Bringing VA Benefits Home.”*

22 Tribes participated & 30+ Claims Clinic events in Indian Country

- Kewa Pueblo
- Pascua 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
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Osage Nation
- Seminole Nation of OK
- 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

Tribal Snapshot & Partners

- Tribal Governments
- Tribal Veteran Summits
- Veteran Service Officer Trainings
- VA Rural Health Consultants
- Minority Outreach Coordinators
- Tribal Indian Health Boards
- Tribal Health Program Health Directors
- Indian Health Service
- Urban Indian Health Programs
- VBA Veterans Service Representatives
- NCA Cemetery Representatives
- VA administrations (VHA, VBA and NCA)

Office of Tribal Government Relations

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