



Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Hosts National Indian Health Conference

Special Guest – Indian Health Services Director Dr. Yvette Roubideaux

(November 8, 2013 – Mashpee, MA) – For the second time in 3 years, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe this week hosts the Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee (DSTAC) national conference and quarterly meeting on the topic of Indian Health Services, held at the Sea Crest Hotel in Falmouth.

On November 7 and 8, Federal officials, including Indian Health Services Director Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, and Tribal leaders from 10 regions across the country are meeting to address national health care concerns for Native Americans, including how the Affordable Care Act will affect Indian Country.

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Councilwoman Cheryl Frye-Cromwell is Vice Chair of DSTAC and the representative of the Nashville Area, which covers the northeast region of the United States, including Mashpee.

“On behalf of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, we welcome all these distinguished national leaders to our homeland of Cape Cod, and sincerely thank Director of Indian Health Services – Dr. Yvette Roubideaux – for taking time out of her busy schedule to visit Cape Cod,” said Frye-Cromwell. “We also thank US Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius for her incredible commitment to Indian Country.”

Among topics discussed at the Conference – budget formulation, 2014 DSTAC priorities, the 2014 Direct Service Tribes 11th Annual National Meeting, NIHB and State ACA Updates, contract support costs, health care best practices, and the Affordable Care Act. Specifically, the IHS budget formulation process and the impacts of the sequestration cuts to Indian Health Programs, including those affecting diabetes, behavioral health and clinic services, and staffing, will be addressed.

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The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe opened a health clinic in December of 2011, and a dental clinic earlier this year. Since the opening of these clinics, and with the support of the IHS/Contract Health Services Program and Tribal Health Support Services, tremendous strides have been made in providing quality, comprehensive and culturally-sensitive health care services to Tribal members and their families. The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe is committed to continuing the development of health care services that will improve the physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological wellness of Tribal members, as well as empower and strengthen the Tribal community.

The mission of the National Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee is to provide expertise on policies, guidelines and programmatic issues that impact the delivery of health care for Indian Tribes, with the emphasis on national policies that will affect Direct Service Tribes. Establishment of this national committee derived from Indian Tribes' concerns expressed to the IHS Director, and has proven to be extremely effective in addressing Native American health care challenges.

The DSTAC is comprised of Tribal leaders from the regions of Aberdeen, Albuquerque, Bermidji, Billings, Nashville (of which the Mashpee Wampanoag is a part), Navajo, Oklahoma City, Phoenix, Portland, and Tucson, DSTAC members advise, assist and collaborate with Indian Health Services officials and representatives, National Indian Health Boards, National Congress of American Indians, United South and Eastern Tribes, and Tribal health boards regarding development of the budget and annual performance for the IHS and the US Department of Health and Human Services.

“Some of the biggest challenges we are facing in Indian health care include implementing the new Affordable Care Act as it pertains to the new marketplace for enrollment of affordable health insurance,” Frye-Cromwell said. “We will have someone from the Massachusetts Health Connector to speak to us about the experience and overview of the enrollment process.”

Following the conclusion of the Conference, attendees stopped by the Mashpee Wampanoag Language Department open house for a tour and discussion of how integrating the native language of the Wampanoag to health care will help to improve service delivery to elders and others.

About the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe:

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, known as the People of the First Light, has inhabited present day Massachusetts for more than 12,000 years. After an arduous process lasting more than three decades, the Mashpee Wampanoag were re-acknowledged as a federally recognized tribe in 2007 and retain full tribal sovereignty rights. The Mashpee tribe currently has approximately 2,600 enrolled citizens.

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