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VETERANS ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20420



September 9, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Mr. Bradley H. Patterson, Jr.
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20501

This is in response to the President's memorandum of August 26, 1976 requesting that emphasis be placed on insuring effective delivery of service to American Indians.

The Veterans Administration does not operate any programs specifically designed or authorized to provide services or benefits to American Indians. Those American Indians, who are veterans, enjoy the same rights and privileges to VA benefits as all other honorably discharged American veterans. Because racial characteristics are not a prerequisite to the receipt of VA benefits, this information has not been a standard part of the master record which is compiled on recipients of VA benefits. There are, therefore, no reports which would indicate how many Indians are on the Compensation, Pensions or Education rolls.

The Veterans Administration is, however, quite cognizant of the special needs of minority groups such as American Indians and has designed special services to provide them increased opportunity for participation in our programs. The Department of Veterans Benefits, through their out-reach activities, has operated mobile vans which provided on-the-spot counseling services throughout Indian reservations and communities. VA's Department of Medicine and Surgery, in cooperation with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, has developed a program for improving the access of American Indians in the "Four Corners" area of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah, to health and social services offered by the Veterans Administration. This latter program, designed in conjunction with the Navajo Health Authority and the Navajo Tribal Council, will initially employ eight local American Indians who will be trained to assist the "Four Corners" area population on medical and benefits eligibility questions.

It is our intention to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs and to continue our contacts with DHEW Indian Health Services, Tribal Welfare Councils, and County and State offices of Indian Affairs to promote the improved delivery of available services and benefits to America's Indian population.



Richard L. Roudebush
RICHARD L. ROUDEBUSH
Administrator