

September 9, 2015

Maria Dadgar, Executive Director  
Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.  
2214 North Central Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

**Re: Extension of Medicaid Coverage for Former Tribal Foster Youth**

Dear Ms. Dadgar:

Thank you for your letter dated July 14, 2015. The AHCCCS Administration appreciates the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona's leadership in facilitating the Tribal Social Services Workgroup (the "Workgroup"), and thanks Workgroup members and representatives for their efforts to improve access to health care for tribal foster youth.

In response to the recommendations offered, I would like to inform you of the progress AHCCCS has made on several sections of the recommendations. Attached is an update on the decisions and progress made on each recommendation. It is my understanding that, in developing recommendations and next steps for extending Former Foster Youth eligibility to tribal foster youth, the Workgroup also identified other concerns about delays in eligibility determinations or redeterminations for current tribal foster youth. The Workgroup also developed recommendations to simplify and enhance Medicaid eligibility transitions for current tribal foster youth. AHCCCS' progress on these recommendations is included in the attachment.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the agencies and Tribes to implement Former Foster Youth coverage for tribal foster youth and other administrative efficiencies that will simplify transition of Medicaid-eligible youth when placement changes.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Betlach  
Director

TB:js

Enclosure

## **Tribal Foster Youth/Medicaid Workgroup – Recommendation Updates**

Note - The Former Foster Youth eligibility category in Arizona is called Young Adult Transitional Insurance eligibility (YATI).

1. Revise the application for benefits (Medicaid Electronic/Paper Application) by adding the question, “Was anyone in Arizona tribal foster care on his/her 18th birthday?”

Status: The question has been submitted for addition to both HEAplus and the paper application. The change to HEAplus requires programming, and a system change request has been made. In the mean-time, if a YATI determination is needed for a former tribal foster youth a manual work-around will be used to complete the determination. If you have an individual who is screening as over-income for Medicaid and was in tribal foster care at age 18, please e-mail the information to [Penny.Ellis@azahcccs.gov](mailto:Penny.Ellis@azahcccs.gov).

2. Develop a cover page for the paper application to be used by Tribal Social Services agencies to identify youth in tribal Foster Care, and to provide updates to custody and placement.

Status: The draft cover page and instructions have been revised based on comments from the Workgroup.

3. Establish a centralized processing at DES/DBME for youth aging out of tribal foster care.
  - a. The central unit would process all Medicaid applications for youth aging out of tribal foster care.

Status: The Research & Analysis Unit at DES Family Assistance Administration (FAA) currently completes these determinations for youth aging out of DCS foster care. DES/FAA has agreed to have the same unit complete the determinations for the tribal youth aging out of foster care as they are familiar with the process and requirements.

- b. Develop a system to send alerts to tribal case managers for youth that are close to aging out of care.

Status: This recommendation will need to be evaluated by AHCCCS and DES, as the data elements needed to implement this recommendation are not currently captured or stored in the eligibility system. This would require significant system changes and programming to implement.

4. Once finalized, use the Young Adult Transitional Insurance eligibility (YATI) – Referral and DCS/FAA Turn-Around Document (TAD) – FAA form FAA-1097A to create a form FAA-1097T for youth aging out of tribal foster care.

Status: The FAA-1097A has been finalized and was used to create a draft FAA-1097T form. The draft was sent to ITCA for review and distribution to tribal stakeholders on August 20, 2015.

5. Revise the Medicaid Eligibility Manual to clarify that youth who aged out of tribal foster care are potentially eligible for YATI.

Status: All policy sections have been revised and submitted for publication in the manual. The first draft of the procedures have been completed. Once the details for submitting the referrals to the DES/FAA Research & Analysis Unit are developed, they will be submitted for addition to the policy manual as well.

6. Former Foster Youth – Allow self attestation for verification of aging out of foster care.

Status: AHCCCS has not implemented self-attestation of aging out of foster care for any former foster youth. The agency has found a significant number of people answer the “aged out of foster care” question incorrectly, and are not actually eligible for YATI. The person may have been in foster care but did not age out of the system, or they aged out of care in another state. To prevent barriers to access, but also ensure that the eligibility requirement is met, DES and AHCCCS (the “Agencies”) have taken on the primary role of verifying this factor. If unable to verify the factor electronically, the Agencies complete research of the files as well as make telephone contacts with DCS to confirm the youth’s foster care status at age 18. AHCCCS proposes to leave the current verification process in place for the former foster youth. The process can be reviewed after a period of time to assess how well it is working and address any concerns.

7. Continue the Workgroup to develop and implement an information dissemination and training plan for the new processes.

AHCCCS supports the ongoing efforts of the Workgroup to ensure agreed upon changes and enhancements are implemented smoothly, and that staff receive the information and training needed to ensure the success of this project.