



CHEROKEE NATION

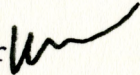
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Wilma P. Mankiller
Principal Chief

John A. Ketcher
Deputy Chief

January 10, 1994

To: Dan Agent

From: Wilma Mankiller 

Re: Health Care Reform

I have chosen national health care reform for a column. If it is too long, please feel free to edit down.

" In recent years, serious problems have developed within the health care system in the United States. Costs are skyrocketing. Americans spend more on health care than any other country in the world. Today, almost 14 percent of the money spent in the United States goes to health care. By the year 2000, health care's share will grow to 10 percent - one out of every five dollars. In response, President Clinton has proposed to radically reform the health care system.

All Americans are concerned about how President Clinton's national reform proposal will impact our individual health care. Cherokee and other Indian people are especially hard hit by problems in the health system. While costs continue to rise, we face shrinking health care funds. Funding for health services to tribal people through the Indian Health Service (IHS) and other public programs such as Medicaid, have not kept pace with inflation and rapidly rising tribal populations. The result is fewer health care dollars available for Indian patients, per person, than for non-Indian people. For example, in the State of Oklahoma, yearly health care costs average \$2,700 per person. Yet despite intense lobbying efforts by Oklahoma tribes, less than \$900 per person is available for Indians in Oklahoma through the IHS and other programs which fund health care for Native people. Because of the massive federal budget deficit that is not likely to change.

At the Cherokee Nation we are especially concerned about how managed competition or universal care will impact Indian health and tribal health systems. We agree that some kind of national health care reform is desperately needed. Those of