

The Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee met on October 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> with Indian Health Service Director Dr. Yvette Roubideaux , to discuss the reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians. It has been and continues to be a top priority for me to play a role in the consultative process with the Indian Health Service to ensure that dialogue occurs related to the decision making process on diabetes treatment and prevention efforts. It remains imperative that we, as a committee of native Americans, make our voices heard through this concerted effort; therefore, with funding for the program expiring in fiscal year 2011, the committee is working diligently to ensure that funding remains viable through multi-year grants.

During the recent two-day TLDC meeting the process of strategic plan development began, which is inclusive of the future plans for the committee and its continued viability. The Committee also coordinated with Dr. Roubideaux regarding the consultation process and the importance of government-to-government relationships in the distribution of Special Diabetes Program for Indians Fund. The committee needs to work directly with the IHS Director to develop strategies for distributing additional SDPI dollars in a timely manner if they are made available. The next quarterly meeting will be held in Washington as a strategic move to place Committee members with members of Congress. The distribution of SDPI dollar as mentioned above reflects, "If they are made available," yet, we as tribal committee members want to change that verbiage to read, "when they are made available." Our successes have occurred as a tribal nation because of our tenacity and I want to thank each one of you for the privilege that I have to exercise this trait in securing the best diabetes healthcare available to us.

I would also like to wish each of you a wonderful Christmas Holiday and best wishes for the New Year and remind you to please pray for our fighting men and women who are away from their families right now.

They are the ones who are sacrificing the most so that we can enjoy our Holidays.

Connie Barker

Tribal Legislator, Pickens District