



Happy New Year!

For each and every day in the upcoming new year,
wishing you the very best of health and happiness!

Warmly,
Your friends at Gila River Health Care

Important News for 2017

AmeriCorps Office at HHKMH

Beginning January 17, 2017, AmeriCorps members will be available to assist with the following services:



- DD214's
- Headstone Requests
- Scheduling with a Service Officer
- Veteran & Military Family Resource Navigation

For more information, please contact:

Leonard Bruce, AmeriCorps Coordinator - Veterans Serving Veterans Gila River Indian Community
Phone: (520) 562-6221

Native Americans Exempt From Tax Penalty

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) promotes health insurance coverage for all. For income tax year 2016 the ACA requires all taxpayers to report their proof of health insurance or pay the penalty. As a Native American with a tribal affiliation, you are entitled to an exemption from this penalty. This exemption waives the payment penalty. To claim this exemption, you have some options.

Exemptions from the Penalty

You may qualify for an exemption from the penalty for not having health insurance coverage for any of the months during the 2016 calendar year. The law states that you must have minimum essential coverage for all months. This rule applies not only to the tax filer but must include any of the dependents that are claimed. One day of coverage in the month counts as coverage for the entire month. Here are some of the reasons the federal government will consider you as exempt:

- You are a member of a federally recognized tribe or eligible for services through an Indian Health Services/tribal facility, such as Gila River Health Care
- The lowest-priced health care coverage available to you would cost more than 8% of your household income
- You are not required to file a tax return
- You are a member of a recognized religious sect with religious objections to insurance
- You are incarcerated (either detained or jailed), and not being held pending disposition of charges
- You are not lawfully present in the U.S.
- You qualify for a hardship exemption

Individuals need to only meet one of the above exemption criteria.

How to Apply for a Tribal Exemption Members of federally recognized tribes, Alaskan Natives and people who are otherwise eligible for services through an Indian health care provider can apply for an exemption two different ways. Gila River Health Care Benefits Coordination Staff would like to assist you with this process.

1. Paper Application

The Benefits Coordinators can assist you with completing a paper exemption application form and mailing it with supporting documentation. You will need to submit documentation of membership in a federally recognized tribe. You must provide one of the following:

- Certificate of Indian Blood, or
- Tribal Identification Card or
- Letter from Gila River Health Care stating you are eligible for services.

Upon completion of this process, the Marketplace will send you an Exemption Certification Number (ECN). The ECN will stay with you forever, similar to a social security number. Please note if you applied for and received an ECN number in 2015, this is the same number you will use on your 2016 IRS Federal Income Tax Return Form. This number will tell the federal government you are exempt from the tax penalty. Once you receive this number, you would indicate this on your IRS form. Exemptions from this source need to be obtained at the earliest opportunity.

2. Claiming an Exemption on Federal Income Taxes

Remember, when you file a federal income tax return use the IRS health coverage exemption Form 8965. Codes for exemption (A-E) are listed in the instructions. Mark the specific code for Native Americans.

The important thing to remember is Gila River Health Care has trained staff at their site in Komatke and Hu Hu Kam Memorial Hospital to assist with this process. Also, you Do Not require health insurance to be seen at any of our facilities. This change in the ACA does not impact your eligibility for care as a Native American at our facilities.

For further information, contact the Benefit Coordination Department: (520) 562-3321 Ext: 1311 or (602) 528-1311.

