

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 28, 2021

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce:

Thank you for your leadership to secure funding for the Urban Indian Health Program of the Indian Health Service (IHS). As you work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we write to request an increase in funding for the Urban Indian Health Program to \$200,548,000 and an increase in funding for the Tribal Epidemiology Centers to \$24 million.

Since FY 2017, the Urban Indian Health Program (UIHP) has seen modest increases in funding thanks to your initiative and directive to help address pay costs, inflation, and population growth. This includes a much-needed \$5 million increase in FY 2021. The requested increase to \$200,548,000 million for FY 2022 addresses the expansion of the UIHP to 41 programs, overdue investments in infrastructure, and health care cost inflation.

UIHPs serve our communities by providing culturally attuned health care and human services, conducting data research, and collaborating with tribal, community, and federal partners. As this Subcommittee knows well, the UIHP has traditionally received less than one percent of IHS appropriations to provide a variety of health care and medical services to the 71% of the American Indian and Alaska Native population that live in urban areas. This funding level will allow the UIHP to adequately provide health care services to tribal citizens in our communities.

Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TEC) are another vital program within IHS. TECs conduct research used to identify the root causes of health disparities and improve data-driven health care decision making in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. They play a critical role in providing disease surveillance and technical assistance to tribal and urban Indian organizations. However, TECs remain woefully underfunded despite their success and un-replicated services. Since FY 2017, the TEC program has seen only a limited increase in funding levels. In the FY 2022 appropriations bill, we request an increase in the funding for the Tribal Epidemiology Centers program to \$24 million. This funding level would ensure TECs can conduct epidemiology and public health functions critical to the delivery of health care services for tribal and urban Indian communities.

As we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and look to better prepare for future disease outbreaks and pandemics, increased funding for UIHPs and TECs is critical to

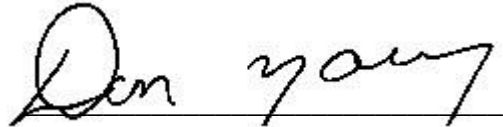
strengthening our public health and primary care system. We appreciate your consideration of our request for increased funding for the Urban Indian Health Program and Tribal Epidemiology Centers to implement the strategic plan for the Urban Indian Health Programs as directed by Congress in the FY 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, and to begin to move towards full funding for the IHS's IHS Direct, Tribal 638, and UIHP (I/T/U) system of care.

Sincerely,



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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



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Don Young  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

**Urban Indian Health Program and Tribal Epidemiology Centers, FY 2022**  
**List of Signatories**  
April 28, 2021

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