



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

**AUG 12 2021**

Dear Tribal Leader:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is initiating Tribal Consultation and invites you to participate in two virtual Consultations to seek your input and recommendations on mandatory funding approaches for the Indian Health Service (IHS).

The fiscal year (FY) 2022 President's Budget commits to conducting robust Tribal Consultation to evaluate options, including mandatory funding, to provide adequate, stable, and predictable funding for the IHS in the future. To help facilitate your input and recommendations regarding mandatory funding approaches, HHS would like your input on the following questions and discussion points, in addition to any other feedback you would like to provide:

1. What is the appropriate funding level for a mandatory funding proposal?
  - *The Biden Administration is committed to advancing health equity for American Indians and Alaska Natives by investing in the IHS. The IHS is historically underfunded, and a 2018 analysis by the IHS Indian Health Care Improvement Fund Workgroup indicates that the agency is funded at less than 50 percent of the total health care need, before considering facilities backlogs, sanitation construction needs, and other mission critical projects like Health Information Technology Modernization. We seek input on the appropriate funding level to address persistent health disparities in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.*
2. What is the appropriate growth pattern for a mandatory funding proposal?
  - *Funding levels will need to change over time to address the rising cost of health care services, the changing scope of facilities and staffing needs, and for costs such as Contract Support Costs and Tribal Lease Payments. We seek input on the appropriate growth pattern over time to address these increasing costs and preserve purchasing power.*
3. What is the appropriate appropriations structure for a mandatory funding proposal?
  - *A mandatory appropriation can take many forms, from a definite annually appropriated entitlement, to an indefinite appropriation providing funding over several years. We seek input on the structure for the mandatory appropriation that best suits the needs of the Indian health system.*

I invite you to join us for two virtual Tribal Consultations to share your input and recommendations on mandatory funding approaches and to discuss these important questions as well as hear your thoughts and concerns. Tribal Consultation dates, times, and virtual platforms are included below. In addition, if you would like to submit written comments and recommendations on the mandatory funding approaches, please submit comments by **Friday, September 3, 2021**. You can submit written comments via email at [consultation@hhs.gov](mailto:consultation@hhs.gov).

**TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS (VIRTUAL):**

**Wednesday, August 25, 2021 @ 1:00 – 4:00 PM EST**

Zoom Information: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1619486752>

Meeting ID: 161 948 6752

One tap mobile:

+16692545252, 1619486752# US

+16692161590, 1619486752# US

**Wednesday, September 1, 2021 @ 2:00 – 5:00 PM EST**

Zoom Information: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1610450106>

Meeting ID: 161 045 0106

One tap mobile:

+16692545252, 1610450106# US

+16692161590, 1610450106# US

The IHS will initiate Urban Confer to seek input and recommendations from Urban Indian Organization Leaders on mandatory funding approaches for the IHS.

Thank you for your support and partnership as we work to evaluate mandatory funding approaches for the IHS. I look forward to our discussion.

Sincerely,



Xavier Becerra  
Secretary