



NPAIHB
Indian Leadership for Indian Health

LUMMI NATION



TREATY OF 1855

National Indian Health Board 

November 29, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chair
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Shelby, Chairman Merkley, and Ranking Member Murkowski:

On behalf of the 574 Tribal nations and Member Organizations we represent, we write to you to respectfully request that Congress include Advance Appropriations for Indian health care services and facilities in the Appropriations measure for FY 2022. We also urge Congress to adopt no less than the House-passed levels for Indian health funding.

Advance Appropriations has been under consideration by Congress for several years and is supported by President Biden’s Budget Request for FY 2022, beginning FY 2023 at \$9 Billion.¹ The Senate proposed

¹ “FY 2023 Advance Appropriation. For the first time, the FY 2022 President’s Budget proposes advance appropriations for the IHS at \$9 billion in discretionary budget authority for FY 2023. Advance Appropriations will protect IHS, Tribal, and urban Indian health programs from the impact of government shutdowns and the uncertainty of the annual appropriations process. Unlike Medicare and Medicaid, which receive substantial mandatory funding, and the Veterans Health Administration, which receives an advance appropriation, IHS is currently funded primarily through annual discretionary appropriations. Advance appropriations will provide stable, predictable funding, allowing IHS, Tribal, and urban Indian health programs to effectively and efficiently manage budgets, coordinate care,

bill includes, for the first time, Advance Appropriations for the Indian Health Services and Indian Health Facilities accounts.

Likewise, the Senate Budget Resolution, S.Con.Res.14, also provided authority for Advance Appropriations. The Government Accountability Office has also issued a 2018 Report indicating that Advance Appropriations can help alleviate negative effects upon the Indian health system arising from budget uncertainty, such as Continuing Resolutions and government shutdowns.²

Providing Advance Appropriations would be the first step in establishing budget certainty for the Indian health care system and fulfilling the United States' trust responsibility and treaty obligations to Tribal nations. We would also urge Congress to provide full and mandatory funding for the Indian health care system, beginning with adopting no less than the House-passed levels, and to reclassify the contract support costs and section 105(l) leases as mandatory funding.³

Thank you for your consideration and support for Indian health care. Your support and passage of Advance Appropriations in the FY 2022 Appropriations measure would begin the necessary process for establishing budget certainty and help improve the health care delivery system for Tribal nations and their members. Please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Stacy Bohlen, CEO of the National Indian Health Board, at sbohlen@nihb.org for more information or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



William Smith, *Valdez Native Tribe*
Chairman and Alaska Area Representative
National Indian Health Board



Gerald Gray
Chairman
Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders' Council

and improve health outcomes for American Indians and Alaska Natives.” Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2022. Indian Health Service. Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees, at 5.

² See U.S. Gov't Accountability Off., GAO-18-652, Indian Health Service: Considerations Relating to Providing Advance Appropriation Authority (2018).

³ “FY 2023 Contract Support Costs and Section 105(l) Lease Agreements In addition, the Budget proposes reclassification of the appropriations for Contract Support Costs and section 105(l) lease agreements beginning in FY2023. Specifically, the Budget proposes that, beginning in FY 2023, these accounts will continue to be funded through the Appropriations process but will be reclassified as mandatory funding. At present, Congress provides funding for these costs through an indefinite discretionary appropriation. These costs are more appropriately funded from mandatory appropriations, because they arise from the operation of law.” Department of Health and Human Services Fiscal Year 2022. Indian Health Service. Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees, at 5.



William Jones, Jr.
Chairman
Lummi Nation



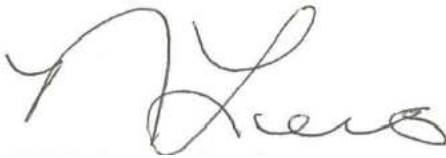
Ayn White
Executive Director
Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board, Inc.



Kirk Francis
President
United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty
Protection Fund



Mark LeBeau, MS, PhD
Chief Executive Officer
California Rural Indian Health Board



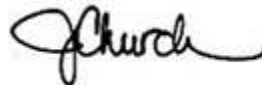
Nickolaus Lewis
Chairman
Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board



Will Funmaker
Executive Director
Great Lakes Area Tribal Health Board



Alberta Unok
President/CEO
Alaska Native Health Board



Jerilyn Church
President/CEO
Great Plains Tribal Leaders' Health Board

CC:

- Senator Brian Schatz
- Senator Jon Tester
- Senator John Hoeven
- Senator James Lankford
- Senator Steve Daines
- Senator Jerry Moran