

## AI/AN Health Partners

December 11, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee  
2007 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee  
2256 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

The AI/AN Health Partners is a coalition of health organizations dedicated to improving health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs). AI/ANs face substantial health disparities, and higher mortality and morbidity rates than the general population. AI/ANs rely on the Indian Health service (IHS) for quality health care, however, the IHS must have sufficient resources, to meet its mission to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level. We urge you to fund the IHS at the highest amount possible.

As health organizations, we are concerned that resources appropriated for the IHS will not fully meet the needs of AI/ANs. We recognize the budget constraints your committees face, but we are also aware that federal funding for tribal health programs has fallen woefully short. Because the IHS has been chronically underfunded, in 2013, the Indian Health Service spent just \$2,849 per capita for patient health services, well below the national average of \$7,717.

The 2018 fiscal year IHS funding levels proposed by the House and Senate Interior Committees each address important areas necessary to begin to “raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives.” However, while both committees highlighted important health care, staffing, housing and facilities needs, they selected some but not others.

We believe that all, not just some, of the funding priorities set by the House and the Senate Interior Committees are essential. We urge you to fully fund the Indian Health Service at \$5,174,232,000 for FY 2018.

This amount reflects all the funding priorities set out in both the House and Senate FY 18 Interior appropriations bills.

Thank you for considering this request. If you have any questions, please contact Judy Sherman at: [shermanjc4206@gmail.com](mailto:shermanjc4206@gmail.com) or (202) 309-2047.

Sincerely,  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
American Academy of PAs  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Dental Association  
American Psychological Association  
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)  
March of Dimes  
National Council for Behavioral Health  
National Kidney Foundation