

AI/AN Health Partners

December 11, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairwoman
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
SD-131 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Vice Chairman
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
SD-131 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Vice Chairman Udall:

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 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

