



FEB 10 2017

Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am pleased to share an update on the status of the exemption of certain Indian Health Service (IHS) positions from the Federal civilian hiring freeze as provided by the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) guidance memoranda (M-17-17<sup>1</sup> and M-17-18<sup>2</sup>) for implementing the *Presidential Memoranda Regarding the Hiring Freeze*.<sup>3</sup>

I want to thank everyone for sending and sharing copies of your letters and resolutions related to the impact of the Federal civilian hiring freeze on the IHS and our health care delivery system. I shared these with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to illustrate the critical need for an exemption to the hiring freeze to avoid negatively impacting the delivery and quality of health care within our system.

HHS recently issued guidance identifying HHS-wide positions and occupational series that are exempt from the hiring freeze. The guidance identified positions and occupational series that meet the exemptions criteria and fall within the parameters of public safety and national security. For the IHS, positions involved in direct patient care and a number of ancillary mission critical support positions without which patient care providers and facilities could not function, are now exempt. In addition, positions directly related to public health safety and emergencies, national security and critical infrastructure are also exempt.

The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps is exempt from the hiring freeze per OMB memorandum M-17-18. This means Commissioned Corps officers may continue to be hired and detailed to critical areas of need within the IHS, and to Tribal health programs.

The IHS will continue to work with HHS to seek additional exemptions, if needed, from the Federal civilian hiring freeze that fall within the parameters of public safety and national security. I will share additional updates with you as soon they become available.

Sincerely,

/Chris Buchanan/

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Acting Director

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Management and Budget (OMB). (January 25, 2017). *Memorandum: Immediate Actions and Initial Guidance on Federal Civilian Hiring Freeze* (M-17-17). Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/25/omb-memorandum-immediate-actions-and-initial-guidance-federal-civilian>.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Management and Budget (OMB). (January 31, 2017). *Memorandum: Federal Civilian Hiring Freeze, issued on January 31* (M-17-18). Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/31/federal-civilian-hiring-freeze-guidance>.

<sup>3</sup> President Donald J. Trump (January 23, 2017). *Presidential Memorandum Regarding the Hiring Freeze*. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/23/presidential-memorandum-regarding-hiring-freeze>.