



AUG 24 2018

Dear Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am writing to update you on efforts by the Indian Health Service (IHS) to develop a policy and implementation plan to nationalize a Community Health Aide Program (CHAP), as authorized by the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA). More specifically, I am writing to update you on this effort as it relates to Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs).

In July – October 2016, the IHS conducted a simultaneous Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer with Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and UIOs on a draft policy statement to expand the CHAP. The IHS reported the outcomes in January 2017 and announced that the Agency would begin the process to develop a formal policy and implementation plan to nationalize the CHAP under the provisions outlined in the IHCIA at 25 U.S.C. § 1616l(d).

I continue to receive requests and recommendations to include UIOs in CHAP nationalization or expansion efforts. I would like to clarify that the IHCIA, unfortunately, does not authorize the CHAP in UIOs. To extend the CHAP to UIOs would require new legislative authority.

The IHS encourages UIOs to familiarize yourselves with the recently established CHAP Tribal Advisory Group (TAG). The CHAP TAG operates under the Intergovernmental Exemption to the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as authorized by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (2 U.S.C. § 1534(b)), which provides for meetings between Federal officials and elected officials of Tribal Governments (or designated Tribal employees who have been authorized to act on the elected official's behalf when acting in their official capacities). For information about the CHAP TAG, including membership, charter, activities, and more, please visit the CHAP TAG Web site at <https://www.ihs.gov/chap/chaptag>.

If you have any comments or questions regarding the CHAP nationalization or expansion efforts, please contact Ms. Minette Galindo, Public Health Advisor, Division of Behavioral Health, IHS, by telephone at (301) 443-2038 or by e-mail at minette.galindo@ihs.gov.

Sincerely,

/Michael D. Weahkee/

RADM Michael D. Weahkee, MBA, MHSA
Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service
Acting Director

Enclosures: July 20, 2016-dated letter to Urban Indian Organization Leaders on the CHAP
July 29, 2016-dated letter to Urban Indian Organization Leaders on the Extension of the
Comment Period for CHAP