



AUG 13 2021

Dear Urban Indian Organization Leader:

On behalf of the Indian Health Service (IHS), I am writing to initiate Urban Confer to seek your input and recommendations on mandatory funding approaches at the IHS. This Urban Confer complements the Tribal Consultation initiated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The fiscal year (FY) 2022 President's Budget commits to conducting robust Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer to evaluate options, including mandatory funding, to provide adequate, stable, and predictable funding for the IHS in the future. To help facilitate your input and recommendations regarding mandatory funding approaches, the IHS would like your input on the following questions and discussion points, in addition to any other feedback you may have:

1. What is the appropriate funding level for a mandatory funding proposal?
 - The Biden Administration is committed to advancing health equity for American Indians and Alaska Natives by investing in the IHS. The IHS is historically underfunded, and a 2018 analysis by the Indian Health Care Improvement Fund Workgroup indicates that the Agency is funded at less than 50 percent of the total health care need, before considering facilities backlogs, sanitation construction needs, and other mission-critical projects, like electronic health record modernization. We seek input on the appropriate funding level to address persistent health disparities in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.
2. What is the appropriate growth pattern for a mandatory funding proposal?
 - Funding levels will need to change over time to address the rising cost of health care services, the changing scope of facilities and staffing needs, and for costs like Contract Support Costs and Tribal Lease Payments. We seek input on the appropriate growth pattern over time to address these increasing costs and preserve purchasing power.
3. What is the appropriate appropriations structure for a mandatory funding proposal?
 - A mandatory appropriation can take many forms, from a definite annually appropriated entitlement, to an indefinite appropriation providing funding over several years. We seek input on the structure for the mandatory appropriation that best suits the needs of the Indian health system.

URBAN CONFER SESSION (VIRTUAL): I invite you to join us during the virtual Urban Confer session that follows to share your input and recommendations on mandatory funding approaches and to discuss these important questions.

DATE:	Monday, August 30, 2021
TIME:	2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (EDT)
TELEPHONE:	(833) 568-8864 Toll-free Meeting ID: 161 104 8863 Passcode: 961455
ZOOM INFORMATION:	Join the ZoomGov Meeting at: https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1611048863?pwd=anh5RklxRFZ6YzFqVFBZVnNlkdhdz09

WRITTEN COMMENTS and RECOMMENDATIONS: Please send your comments and recommendations on mandatory funding approaches by no later than **Friday, September 3, 2021:**

- Urban Confer Comments by e-mail to: urbanconfer@ihs.gov.
Please use the Subject Line: **IHS Mandatory Funding Approaches**

Thank you for your support and partnership as we work to evaluate mandatory funding approaches for the IHS. I look forward to our discussion.

Sincerely,

/Elizabeth A. Fowler/
Acting Director