



MAY 06 2022

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to bring you up to date on actions by the Indian Health Service (IHS) to update the IHS Tribal Consultation Policy (Consultation Policy) and process.

On April 27, 2021, the IHS initiated Tribal Consultation seeking input and recommendations from Tribal Leaders on improving the 2006-issued Consultation Policy. On June 8, 2021, the IHS hosted a virtual Tribal Consultation session and accepted written comments through June 15, 2021. In conjunction with this Tribal Consultation, the IHS formed the IHS Director's Advisory Workgroup on Tribal Consultation (Consultation Workgroup), comprised of Tribal and Federal members, to assist with reviewing Tribal Consultation feedback and developing recommendations for updating the Consultation Policy and process.

On August 24, 2021, the Consultation Workgroup convened its first meeting and since then has engaged in a series of working sessions reviewing Tribal Consultation feedback, identifying areas for improvement, and developing recommendations for IHS consideration. In an effort to be transparent as early as possible, the IHS identified Tribal recommendations that the Agency was unable to adopt in an updated Consultation Policy, responded to other recommendations with suggested revisions, and sought further clarification on other recommendations.

This month, the Consultation Workgroup resumes its working sessions in order to finalize recommendations for IHS consideration. Once complete, the IHS will initiate nationwide Tribal Consultation seeking feedback on the Consultation Workgroup's recommendations by August.

In closing, I wanted to acknowledge that while the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is concurrently evaluating the HHS Tribal Consultation Policy, it is important for the IHS to continue developing updates to our Consultation Policy. The IHS is committed to actively engaging the Consultation Workgroup to assist us in reviewing changes to the HHS Tribal Consultation Policy and making adjustments as appropriate.

I trust this update is helpful. Thank you for your continued support as we make progress with improving our Tribal Consultation Policy and process. If you have questions, please directly contact Ms. Anna Johnson, Program Analyst, Office of Tribal Self-Governance, IHS, by telephone at (301) 443-2403, or by e-mail at anna.johnson2@ihs.gov.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Fowler -S
Digitally signed by Elizabeth A. Fowler -S
Date: 2022.05.06 16:25:51 -0400

Elizabeth A. Fowler
Acting Director