



MAR 13 2023

Dear Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am writing to announce a second Urban Confer to seek your input and recommendations on how to improve the process for requesting Federal assistance for medical supplies. The Indian Health Service (IHS) previously initiated Urban Confer on [Executive Order \(EO\) 14001](#) “A Sustainable Public Health Supply Chain,” and at this time seeks to gather your input and comments on the attached “Proposed Strategy for Improving Tribal and Urban Indian Organization Access to Federal Resources During a Pandemic Response.” The proposed strategy includes recommendations for improving the process for federally recognized Tribal governments, IHS health care providers, Tribal Health Programs, and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) to request Federal assistance for medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and other appropriate Federal departments and agencies, to facilitate access to medical countermeasures and supplies that may be needed in a public health emergency. This Urban Confer complements the Tribal Consultation on the same subject initiated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

On January 21, 2021, President Biden issued EO 14001 that directs actions to secure supplies necessary for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as future public health emergencies. The goal of EO 14001 is to ensure critical medical supplies are available, and remain available, to state, local, Tribal, and territorial public health authorities in an emergency when local supplies are diminished and cannot be sourced from commercial distributors.

During public health emergencies, the SNS and other Federal and military stockpiles serve as an essential supply chain buffer to meet the demands of state and local medical supplies and equipment when commercial supply is strained or insufficient. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed vulnerabilities in the global medical supply chain that required HHS to expand and enhance SNS capabilities to respond to a nationwide emerging infectious disease that requires widespread use of personal protective equipment.

In response to Executive Order 14001, a Tribal Access Working Group led by HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, in partnership with the IHS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, other HHS offices, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the Department of Homeland Security was formed. [On October 13, 2021, former Acting IHS Director Elizabeth Fowler initiated Urban Confer](#) under EO 14001 to identify gaps in the request process for UIO providers, and to seek recommendations on how to close such gaps to meet the needs of the COVID-19 and future emergency responses. Urban Indian Organization input was invaluable as the Tribal Access Working Group developed the attached proposed strategy on which we seek your input during this Urban Confer.

As part of this Urban Confer, I welcome your input on the following questions:

1. Do the recommendations in the attached document describe processes that improve the ability of UIOs to request and obtain timely and effective access to medical supplies held

in the SNS and other Federal stockpiles when needed during the pandemic or other future large-scale public health emergency?

2. Are there gaps or issues in the request processes described in the attached recommendations that must be addressed to enable federally recognized Tribal governments and UIOs to obtain timely and effective access to medical supplies held in the SNS and other Federal stockpiles, when needed during a pandemic or other future large-scale public health emergency?
3. What further recommendations do you have to improve the processes through which UIOs can request assistance to obtain timely and effective access to medical supplies held in the SNS and other Federal stockpiles, when needed during a pandemic or other future large-scale public health emergency?

**URBAN CONFER SESSION (VIRTUAL):** Please register and join us for Urban Confer:

<b>URBAN CONFER SESSION: Access to Federal Medical Supplies</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	Thursday, March 23, 2023
<b>TIME:</b>	2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. EDT
<b>ZOOM INFORMATION:</b>	Access Zoom by Telephone: (833) 568-8864 Meeting ID: 160 240 9262 Passcode: 871717 Zoom Meeting: <a href="https://ihs.gov.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItd20pzksGHhZ3Ce9N3I0ykaGM72r7q8">https://ihs.gov.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJItd20pzksGHhZ3Ce9N3I0ykaGM72r7q8</a>

**WRITTEN COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Please send your comments and recommendations on the process for requesting Federal assistance for Federal medical supplies, by **Monday, April 24, 2023**.

By E-MAIL to: [urbanconfer@ihs.gov](mailto:urbanconfer@ihs.gov) – Subject Line: **Access to Federal Medical Supplies**

Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we work to improve the process for requesting Federal assistance for medical supplies. I look forward to our discussion

Sincerely,

Roselyn Tso  
-S

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Roselyn Tso -S  
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Roselyn Tso  
Director

Enclosure: Proposed Strategy for Improving Tribal and Urban Indian Organization Access to Federal Resources During a Pandemic Response