



November 13, 2025

Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

This past summer, the Indian Health Service (IHS) initiated Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer on a proposed realignment of the Agency. We sincerely appreciate the thoughtful input and engagement received throughout that process. Your feedback made it clear that a second round of Tribal Consultation would be valuable once the Agency has additional details to share regarding the proposed realignment structure. I am writing to announce the next phase of this effort and to invite your comments and recommendations on the proposed IHS realignment.

The IHS remains steadfast in its commitment to providing high-quality, culturally responsive care that meets the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native patients and their families. The proposed realignment is intended to transform the IHS into a more patient-centered, self-determination-driven, operationally efficient, and fiscally sustainable health care system. Our goal is to create a more accountable and responsive Agency that maximizes resources, enhances coordination, and delivers the highest possible level of care—while continuing to honor and strengthen our Government-to-Government relationships with Tribal Nations and Urban Indian Organizations.

Today, approximately 62 percent of the IHS budget is transferred to Tribes and Tribal organizations through Title I contracts and Title V compacts under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA). The remaining 38 percent of the IHS budget is used to operate federally managed IHS hospitals, health centers, and programs. While Tribes continue to exercise self-determination in ways that reflect their unique needs and priorities, it is equally important that the IHS modernize the health care system it retains. This modernization will strengthen patient care within IHS-operated facilities and elevate the Agency's inherent Federal functions—ensuring that we are an effective partner and support system for self-determination, no matter how each Tribe chooses to exercise that right.

This realignment is about improving accountability and aligning leadership functions with the Agency's modern mission. The intent is to clarify roles, reduce administrative burden, and enable our leaders—both in the field and at headquarters—to focus on their core mandates of policy, oversight, and partnership.

As part of this second Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer process, the IHS will convene four (4) in-person Tribal Consultation sessions and one (1) virtual Urban Confer session to provide multiple opportunities for feedback and discussion on the proposed IHS realignment.

The following schedule and registration information will also be posted on the [IHS Event Calendar](#).

We invite you to register for the sessions you plan to attend using the following link: <https://ihs.gov/zoomgov.com/meeting/register/0WsSdf0JRFm8dA6aTjqXdA>.

Tribal Consultation No. 1 – Durant, Oklahoma

Date: Monday, December 15, 2025

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 PM CT

Venue To Be Determined

Tribal Consultation No. 2 – Denver, Colorado

Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 PM MT

Venue To Be Determined

Tribal Consultation No. 3 – San Diego, California

Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 PM PT

Venue To Be Determined

Tribal Consultation No. 4 – Seattle, Washington

Date: Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 PM PT

Venue To Be Determined

Urban Confer Session – Virtual

Date: Thursday, January 8, 2026

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 PM ET

In alignment with the IHS Tribal Consultation Policy, the highest-ranking official from each respective Indian Tribe will be given the opportunity to address the Tribal Consultation first, followed by other elected officials, those designated by their elected official to represent their respective Indian Tribes, and representatives of Tribal and Indian Organizations.

Please note that for those designated by their elected official to represent their respective Indian Tribes in person at any of the upcoming Tribal Consultations, the IHS must receive an official letter from the Tribe in advance of the session, in order for those designated to sit at the table.

The comment submission deadline for both the Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer is **February 9, 2026**.

- Please email Tribal Consultation comments to consultation@ihs.gov.
- Please email Urban Confer comments to urbanconfer@ihs.gov.
- Please use the **SUBJECT LINE: IHS Proposed Realignment**.

After the comment period closes, the IHS will enter an internal deliberation phase to review all feedback received before moving through an internal clearance process for finalization and implementation. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Xavier Yazzie, Office of the Director, IHS, by email at xavier.yazzie@ihs.gov, or by telephone at (301) 945-3755.

Thank you for your continued partnership and leadership in advancing the health and well-being of Tribal and Urban Indian communities. I look forward to hearing your feedback and working together to shape the future of the Indian Health Service.

Sincerely,

Phillip B.
Smith -S



Digitally signed by Phillip
B. Smith -S
Date: 2025.11.13
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P. Benjamin Smith, M.B.A., M.A.
Acting Director