DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Indian Health Service
Rockville MD 20857

March 25, 2026

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am writing to announce that the Indian Health Service (IHS) published a *Federal Register* Notice on March 12, 2026, that establishes the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Catastrophic Health Emergency Fund (CHEF) threshold. The CHEF request threshold for FY 2026 is $19,630, which represents an increase of $535 from FY 2025. This update to the CHEF threshold is in accordance with the CHEF final rule, which was published in the *Federal Register* on August 30, 2024.

A link to the *Federal Register* Notice, entitled, *Catastrophic Health Emergency Fund (CHEF) Fiscal Year 2026 Threshold* is available online at https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-03-12/pdf/2026-04827.pdf.

The IHS administers the CHEF pursuant to section 202 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA). While IHS and Tribal Purchased/Referred Care (PRC) programs pay providers and suppliers outside the IHS system for providing eligible American Indian and Alaska Native people with care and services not reasonably accessible or available within the IHS system, the CHEF exclusively reimburses PRC programs that incur extraordinary medical costs associated with treating eligible patients who have experienced catastrophic illnesses or disasters.

If you have questions, or need additional information about the CHEF or related matters, please contact CDR Tracy Sanchez, Acting Director, Office of Resource Access and Partnerships, IHS, by telephone at (301) 449-3216, or by email at tracy.sanchez@ihs.gov.

Sincerely,

Clayton W. Fulton
Chief of Staff
(Delegated Authority of the IHS Director)