



April 16, 2026

Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am writing to announce the release of the Indian Health Service (IHS) Phase II Action Plan to address the systemic conditions underlying the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) high-risk designation.

Over the next several months, the IHS is making a comprehensive shift towards a more highly reliable, culturally responsive, and accountable system to strengthen accountability, improve coordination and operations, and address the root causes of inadequate oversight in Agency facilities and programs.

This work is grounded first and foremost in our responsibility to Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs), the patients we serve, and in our commitment to strengthening Government-to-Government relationships.

The IHS Phase II Action Plan follows the Agency's December 2025 Action Plan, which outlined the five areas of emphasis contributing to the GAO's high-risk designation, along with activities that the Agency will focus on to address them. The Phase II Action Plan is intended to provide transparency to Tribes and UIOs regarding actions underway to address the high-risk designation, while also demonstrating to oversight partners, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the GAO, and Congress, how the IHS is advancing measurable and sustained improvement.

The Phase II Action Plan summarizes the Agency's identified areas of emphasis, actions completed to date, actions underway, and planned next steps. It includes defined milestones, deliverables, and monitoring mechanisms that will enable regular progress assessments and identify risks that require escalation. It also reflects how these actions align with the conditions that the GAO evaluates when assessing progress toward removing the high-risk designation, including leadership commitment, capacity, action planning, monitoring, and the ability to demonstrate measurable, sustained progress in implementing corrective actions.

The IHS will continue to provide you with updates and will submit an end-of-fiscal-year (FY) 2026 Action Plan report to Tribes, UIOs, and the GAO, demonstrating progress in implementing the Phase II Action Plan and outlining next steps for FY 2027.

I will work to ensure these commitments translate into measurable results across all IHS programs and operations. The IHS is committed to working in partnership with Tribes,

Tribal Organizations, and UIOs to strengthen governance, accountability, risk management, workforce capability, infrastructure, and performance monitoring in a manner that is measurable, coordinated, and sustainable over time.

Sincerely,

CLAYTON W. FULTON -S  
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Clayton W. Fulton  
Chief of Staff  
(Delegated Authority of the IHS Director)