



Indian Health Service Strategic Realignment Summary Report on Feedback Received via Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer

Overview: On June 13, 2025, the Indian Health Service (IHS) initiated Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer on the Agency's proposed realignment, requesting input on: 1) three areas of focus, including: delivery of direct patient care, enterprise/operational management, and supporting Tribal self-determination; and 2) IHS Tribal Advisory Committees. This letter also announced four in-person Tribal Consultation sessions and one virtual Urban Confer session that would be held in July 2025. On August 6, 2025, the IHS issued a follow-up letter providing an overview of the IHS Strategic Realignment that was presented during the five sessions in July 2025.

Executive Summary: During the 76-day comment period from June 13, 2025, to August 28, 2025, the IHS hosted a total of five sessions to receive feedback on the IHS Strategic Realignment, through four in-person Tribal Consultation sessions (July 8, 10, 15, and 23, 2025) and one virtual Urban Confer session (July 28, 2025). More than 400 participants, representing over 40 Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) provided more than 100 comments offering detailed perspectives on governance, operations, funding, and equity implications.

In summarizing comments across all sessions, Tribal and Urban leaders emphasized the need for clear communication, stronger accountability, transparent decision-making, and more consistent processes and tools to support effective health care operations. Commenters also cautioned that any IHS realignment must lead to meaningful improvements in addressing operational inefficiencies such as staffing shortages and capacity concerns, workflow consistency, and support for quality, culturally grounded reforms that prioritize culturally relevant care and health equity. Tribes and UIOs also focused on governance and advisory structures that enhance input and equitable funding, and expressed concerns about consolidating advisory structures, advocating to maintain Area Office autonomy. They also called for more accessible and collaborative Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer processes.

Decision: After the open comment period concluded, the IHS entered an internal deliberation process reviewing all feedback received. The findings offered a comprehensive picture of the opportunities and challenges facing the Agency and provided an informed direction for developing a proposed realignment that focuses on strengthened patient-centered care, advancing Tribal self-determination through direct service, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, and modernizing enterprise services and functions.

On November 13, 2025, the IHS announced the next phase of Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer in response to feedback requesting an additional round once more information on the proposed structure became available. This second phase identified four in-person Tribal Consultation sessions and one virtual Urban Confer session that are scheduled for December 2025 and January 2026. On December 5, 2025, the IHS further expanded the schedule to add four additional in-person regional sessions and one virtual Tribal Consultation

option, and also provided supporting materials, including an executive summary of the proposed IHS realignment and a draft organizational chart.

Next Steps: On December 15, 2025, the IHS will launch a nine-session schedule that includes seven in-person Tribal Consultation Sessions (December 15-17, 2025, and January 5-8, 2026), one virtual Tribal Consultation session (December 22, 2025), and one virtual Urban Confer session (January 15, 2026). The comment submission deadline for both the Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer is February 9, 2026. The IHS acknowledges the discrepancy in the stated deadlines and confirms that the Agency will accept all comments through February 9, 2026.