

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 05. 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States
The White House
Office of the Vice President
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President,

As you undertake your work leading the Administration's 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) response, we urge you to meaningfully engage with Native communities and Tribal leaders. Specifically, we ask that you ensure the Administration:

- Includes a representative of the Indian Health Service (IHS) on the Administration's COVID-19 task force;
- Provides Tribal leaders, Tribal health departments, and urban Indian health programs with equal access to COVID-19 related information that is provided to their state and local counterparts; and
- Directs all COVID-19 resources identified by Congress for Native communities' use to impacted IHS facilities, Tribes, and urban Indian health programs in a timely manner.

The U.S. government has specific trust and treaty responsibilities to provide American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) with comprehensive quality healthcare. While the IHS serves as the primary agency charged with provision of AI/AN healthcare, all federal healthcare-related programs and initiatives – including the COVID-19 response – share equally in the requirement to fulfill these trust and treaty obligations.

Additionally, to ensure proper precautions and response measures are deployed efficiently, it is imperative that Tribal and urban Indian health teams have access to Congressionally-allocated COVID-19 resources and the most up-to-date information regarding the presence of COVID-19 in their communities. As the IHS noted in its February 24th announcement, the state of the COVID-19 threat “is a rapidly evolving situation, and information is likely to become dated quickly.”¹ As such, it is incumbent on the Administration to keep Indian Tribes, Tribal health departments, and urban Indian health programs apprised of any relevant developments in real time.

¹ Announcement from IHS (Feb. 24, 2020) (online at <https://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/announcements/2020-announcements/coronavirus-disease-2019-and-the-2019-2020-flu-season/>).

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to working with you to uphold the Federal government's Tribal trust and treaty responsibilities and to engage in meaningful government-to-government relations with Indian Tribes and urban Indian communities regarding the national COVID-19 response.

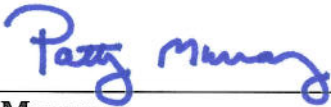
Sincerely,



Tom Udall
U.S. Senator



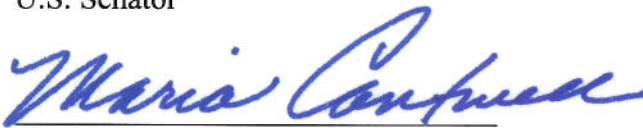
Charles E. Schumer
U.S. Senator



Patty Murray
U.S. Senator



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator



Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator



Dan Sullivan
U.S. Senator




Jon Tester
U.S. Senator



Gary C. Peters
U.S. Senator



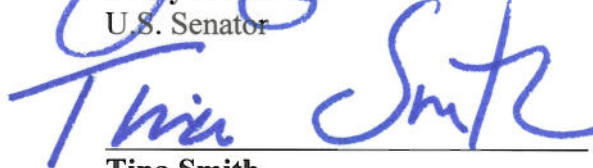
Catherine Cortez Masto
U.S. Senator



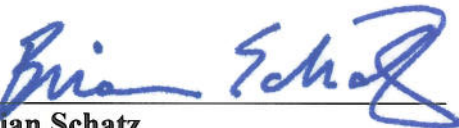
Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator



Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senator



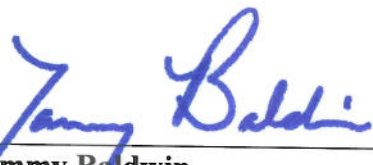
Tina Smith
U.S. Senator



Brian Schatz
U.S. Senator



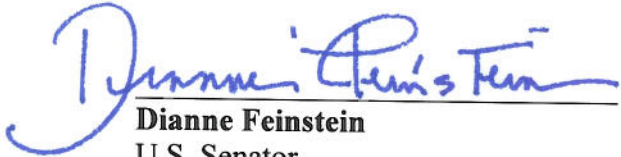
Martin Heinrich
U.S. Senator



Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senator



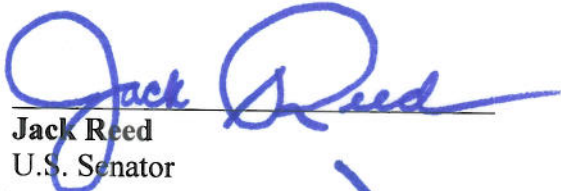
Cory A. Booker
U.S. Senator



Dianne Feinstein
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Kamala D. Harris
U.S. Senator



Jack Reed
U.S. Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
U.S. Senator




Elizabeth Warren
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Bernard Sanders
U.S. Senator



Tammy Duckworth
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Richard Blumenthal
U.S. Senator



Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senator