



November 13, 2020

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is the primary federal agency for improving health care to people who are geographically isolated, economically or medically vulnerable.

HRSA programs help those in need of high-quality primary health care, including people with HIV/AIDS, pregnant women, and mothers. HRSA also supports health professionals' training, the distribution of providers to areas where they are needed most, and improvements in health care delivery.

I want to thank you for your participation during the HHS Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee Meeting, conducted via teleconference, September 9-10, 2020. As part of HRSA's ongoing commitment to Indian Country, I am writing to share the attached responses to the HRSA-specific questions raised during the consultation.

HRSA is committed to maintaining a strong relationship with tribes and tribal organizations as we work to improve outreach and health care services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. We will continue to engage with tribal leaders to address the challenges and needs faced by your communities. To recap, I announced at the February STAC that HRSA planned to create the first-ever HRSA Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC) to engage in regular and meaningful collaboration and consultation with tribal officials on policies that have tribal implications and substantial direct effect on Indian tribes. Since February 2020, HRSA has worked rigorously to recruit Tribal Leaders and did not receive enough nominations from Indian Health Service areas for quorum. HRSA asked for nominations of qualified tribal officials as candidates for appointment as voluntary delegate members from each of the twelve Indian Health Service areas needed to establish the HRSA TAC. HRSA engaged with Indian Country via *Federal Register* Notice TAC recruitment announcements that included two separate extensions and also asked for Tribal leaders' help to receive the nominations on HHS and HRSA consultations and listening sessions. Due to the inability to fill the positions necessary, HRSA will not move forward to establish the TAC at this time. We will plan to engage with you regarding ideas on how we can build on our existing relationships and meet the needs of your communities.

Sincerely,

/ s /

Thomas J. Engels
Administrator