

National Indian Health Board



July 3, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), we are pleased to advance the names of four outstanding and accomplished individuals for the office of Surgeon General of the United States. Three of the candidates are highly-accomplished health care providers who possess great depth and breadth of health and public health policy knowledge and experience. The fourth is an excellent, well-rounded health care provider who has several years of Tribal and public health experience.

Serving as Surgeon General of the United States should be an individual with the capacity to speak and act with authority, care and compassion on behalf of the health of all Americans regarding the health of all of our People. The position requires an individual with a long-term vision for a healthy America. The next Surgeon General should be selected from among the finest physicians, medical academicians and health leaders in this Country, including Indian Country. NIHB and NCAI are pleased to support the candidacy of four individuals who possess these critical and unique qualities. In addition to these qualities, all four individuals possess the exceptional intelligence, expertise, personal gifts and national standing that qualifies each of them to provide leadership to all of our nation's citizens.

The Curricula Vitae for each of these candidates are attached and we briefly introduce them to you here:

Lori Arviso-Alvord, MD, was the first Navajo woman to become a surgeon. She completed her undergraduate work at Dartmouth College where she graduated Cum Laude in dual Majors of Psychology, Sociology, modified with Native American Studies. She received her medical degree from Stanford University. She is the co-author of the widely acclaimed book, The Scalpel and the Silver Bear, which draws from her life experience growing up on the Navajo Reservation, her journey through western medical training and examines the value of combining western medicine with traditional Navajo health practices. Dr. Alvord, a Board Certified Surgeon, received residency training at Stanford University Hospital where she was the Chief Resident, General Surgery. Later, Dr. Alvord served as Dartmouth Medical School's Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Multicultural Affairs and she is a tenured Professor of Surgery.

Charles Grim, DDS, is the immediate past Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS), a position he held from 2002 to 2007. As the IHS Director, Dr. Grim administered a \$4 billion nationwide health care delivery program for approximately 2 million of the nation's 3.4 million AI/AN people. Dr. Grim also served as the Vice-Chair of the Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary's

Intradepartmental Council on Native Americans Affairs (ICNAA). Through his participation on the ICNAA, Dr. Grim took part in the development of HHS-wide policy to provide quality services for American Indians and Alaska Natives, the promotion of departmental consultation with Tribal governments, and the development a comprehensive Departmental strategy that promotes Tribal self-sufficiency and self-determination, all of which supported the government-to-government relationship between the Tribes and the federal government.

Dr. Grim received his dental degree from the University of Oklahoma, College of Dentistry and is currently the Senior Director for Health Services for the Cherokee Nation. Dr. Grim is a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

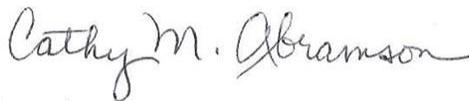
Donald Warne, MD, MPH, a member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe, is currently the Director of the Master of Public Health Program at the North Dakota State University School of Public Health, where he created the first American Indian/Alaska Native track in a Master of Public Health program. Dr. Warne's areas of expertise include Public Health Policy, Health Disparities, American Indian Health, and Family Medicine. Dr. Warne has received numerous honors and distinctions including the Mary J. Berg Distinguished Professorship in Women's Health (2012) and the Josiah N. Moore Native American Alumnus of the Year (2008). Dr. Warne received his Doctor of Medicine from Stanford University School of Medicine and his Master of Public Health from Harvard School of Public Health.

Rear Admiral Craig Vanderwagon, MD, is a former Assistant Surgeon General of the United States. He received his undergraduate degree from Calvin College and Seminary and his medical degree from the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine. Dr. Vanderwagon has held a number of positions in the public health service of the United States, including serving as the Acting Chief Medical Officer for the Indian Health Service and achieving the position of Assistant Surgeon General. He is currently a Senior Partner at Martin, Blanck, and Associates.

NIHB and NCAI proudly support the foregoing candidates and ask the Administration to give careful consideration to this request – which reflects the advice and counsel of Tribal Nations and the mission of our organizations to affirm and empower American Indian and Alaska Natives to protect and improve health and reduce health disparities.

Together, we stand ready to provide assistance to realize this vision and encourage the Administration to reach out to NIHB, NCAI and the Tribes who look forward to the next steps which will play such an important role in restoring the health of our people and **all** Americans.

Sincerely,



Cathy Abramson
Chairperson
National Indian Health Board



Jefferson Keel
President
National Congress of American Indians

About Our Organizations

National Indian Health Board

The National Health Board (NIHB) is a 501(c) 3 not for profit, charitable organization serving and advocating for all federally recognized Tribes to advance the health care services, public health and health status of American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples. Whether Tribes operate their own health care delivery systems through contracting and compacting or receive health care directly from the Indian Health Services (IHS), NIHB is their advocate. NIHB provides health care advocacy services, facilitates Tribal engagement in consultation and delivers timely information and other essential services to all Tribal Governments. NIHB also conducts research; provides policy analysis; assists with program development, management and assessment; public health; supports national and regional meeting planning; and provides training and technical assistance in a variety of Tribal health areas.

National Congress of American Indians

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is the oldest and largest American Indian organization in the United States. Tribal leaders created NCAI in 1944 as a response to termination and assimilation policies that threatened the existence of American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. Since then, NCAI has fought to preserve the treaty rights and sovereign status of tribal governments, while also ensuring that Native people may fully participate in the political system. As the most representative organization of American Indian tribes, NCAI serves the broad interests of tribal governments across the nation.