

# National Indian Health Board



## National Indian Health Board Resolution 18-16

### Request for an improvement in the Tribal Budget Consultation Process

**WHEREAS**, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), established in 1972, serves all Federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribal governments by advocating for the improvement of health care delivery to AI/ANs, as well as upholding the Federal government's trust responsibility to AI/AN Tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribes have a unique government-to-government relationship with the federal government, and it is required that the federal government consult with Tribes before major policy changes; and,

**WHEREAS**, Tribal Nations are political, sovereign entities whose status stems from the inherent sovereignty they possess as self-governing people predating the founding of the United States, and since its founding the United States has recognized them as such and entered into treaties with them on that basis; and,

**WHEREAS**, Executive Order 13175 sets forth clear definitions and frameworks for consultation, policymaking and accountability to ensure that consultation with Indian Tribes is meaningful; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1955, Congress created the Indian Health Service (IHS) in order to help fulfill its trust responsibility for health to the Tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, the IHS Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup (TBFWG) is composed of 24 elected Tribal leaders from the 12 regions of the IHS who are given authority from Tribes in their area to represent the funding interests of those Tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribes from across the country hold regional meetings to discuss budget priorities for the IHS in the upcoming fiscal year during the months of October, November and December; and

**WHEREAS**, these conversations culminate with the meeting of the IHS Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup (TBFWG) in February of each year which develops unified, national Tribal funding recommendations for the IHS which the Administration uses to develop the Annual President's Budget Request; and



**WHEREAS**, the TBFWG prepares detailed testimony to share with Administration and Congressional policy makers so that they can understand the needs of Indian Country when it comes to health; and

**WHEREAS**, the co-chairs of the TBFWG present the budget recommendations at the Annual Tribal Budget Consultation (ATBC) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) so that top agency officials can hear the recommendations of the TBFWG before they develop the President's Budget Request; and

**WHEREAS**, in recent years, the HHS ATBC has taken place just two weeks after the TBFWG meeting, which does not allow the TBFWG or its technical staff adequate time to develop Tribal testimony for engagement with HHS officials; and

**WHEREAS**, it is customary for the Secretary of HHS to attend the ATBC in order to hear directly from Tribes their budgetary needs – on a government to government basis –but no senior HHS officials attended this meeting in 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, in recent years TBFWG co-chairs journey to Washington, DC at considerable time and financial expense to deliver the full testimony to HHS; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress and the Administration are increasingly relying on information from the Tribes about the IHS budget, performance metrics and accountability which require additional resources for technical support staff; and

**WHEREAS**, the TBFWG has a very limited budget for technical support to travel Tribal leaders and experts to Washington, DC and to conduct additional budget analysis as the year progresses; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Directors of NIHB formally requests that the HHS ATBC be held no earlier than the last week in March each year and that the HHS Secretary make a formal commitment (in writing) to attend this meeting; and

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the HHS and IHS provide additional financial resources for technical assistance for the TBFWG to carry out its work for the Tribes.

#### **CERTIFICATION**

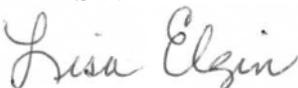
The foregoing resolution was unanimously adopted by the Board, with quorum present, on the 15 day of August, 2018.



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**Chairperson, Vinton Hawley**

**ATTEST:**



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**Recording Secretary, Lisa Elgin**