



February 28, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307 U.S. Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Chairman Cole:

On behalf of the National Indian Health Board and the 574+ sovereign federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribal Nations we serve, we extend our deepest gratitude for your exemplary leadership by encouraging the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to uphold the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Tribal Nations by exempting funding and the workforce that serve Tribal Nations from executive orders or agency actions which may inadvertently impede those obligations.

Following your leadership, the Office of the General Council at the Department of Health and Human Services issued Advisory Opinion 25-01. The Advisory Opinion states that three recent Executive Orders do not abridge the Department's legal obligation to provide healthcare for Indian Tribes and their citizens, the government-to-government relationship, and underlying trust and treaty obligations. This decision upholds the trust responsibility to Tribal Nations and protects vital resources that promote health and well-being in Indian Country.

Your leadership during this time is a keystone to honoring federal trust and treaty obligations. We thank you again for your leadership in upholding Tribal sovereignty. Together, we can ensure that AI/AN citizens receive the utmost care from the Indian health system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

William Smith, *Valdez Native Tribe*  
Chairman  
National Indian Health Board