

National Indian Health Board



April 4, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary,

On behalf of the National Indian Health Board and the 574+ federally recognized Tribal Nations we serve, I express our deep concern about the reported contract and acquisition cuts at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandated by the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency Services (USDS). Tribes believe that any cuts to Indian health funding would be catastrophic for health care delivery in our communities.

Recent reporting has indicated that as much as \$2.9 billion¹ in contract terminations and spending reduction for contracts and acquisitions has been asked of HHS and its agencies and operating divisions. This represents 35% of all HHS contract and procurement spending. USDS has requested the Department comply by April 18th.

Such cuts could severely impact the Indian Health Service (IHS). This is very alarming for Tribes, as the IHS is the primary health care provider in our communities. The IHS is only funded at 1/10th of its need, and any contract cuts to the IHS would immediately impact critical services, including *locum tenens* doctors and nurses, medical equipment, medical supplies and medications, and other services necessary for IHS to keep facilities open and meet accreditation and Medicare conditions of participation requirements. Cuts would immediately require facilities to close their doors resulting in mortality.

We know that as Secretary, you are working to protect the health of Indian Country and to make Indian Country healthy again. We urge you to intervene to ensure there is no possibility of such cuts to the IHS and to provide clarity that no direction to implement cuts has been given to the Agency.

In good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A.C. Locklear".

A.C. Locklear, *Lumbee Tribe*
Interim CEO
National Indian Health Board

¹ "Trump Administration Demands Additional Cuts at C.D.C." *New York Times*, April 2, 2025. ([Trump Administration Demands Additional Cuts at C.D.C. - The New York Times](#))

