



DEC 28 2000

Indian Health Service
Rockville MD 20857

Dear Tribal Leader:

On November 6th, President Clinton reaffirmed the federal commitment to tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and self-government by issuing Executive Order # 13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. This Executive Order builds on prior actions and ensures that all Executive departments and agencies consult with Indian tribes and respect tribal sovereignty as we develop policy that affects Indian communities.

In May 2000, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) submitted the consultation policies of all HHS Operating and Staff Divisions to tribal leaders for review and comment. The Indian Health Service (IHS) received positive responses from tribal leaders about its policy. The tribes' feedback to the Secretary conveyed that tribes believe their views are being heard and acted upon at the highest levels within the IHS.

To ensure that tribes will continue to be successful in effecting changes to Federal policy, the IHS consultation and participation policy, adopted in 1997, should once again be reviewed and strengthened.

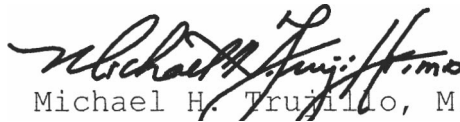
I have attached a copy of the current IHS policy, IHS Circular No. 97-07, "Tribal Consultation and Participation Policy" for your review. In addition, I have attached a draft copy of a proposed revised consultation and participation policy for the IHS that has been submitted to me by the Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee (TSGAC). The TSGAC recognized that broader consultation with tribes must be conducted before policy changes could be considered.

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As we continue to improve the consultation process in the IHS, this is an opportunity for tribal leaders to review the existing policy as well as the TSGAC draft proposed policy.

Please submit your comments and any additional recommendations for adoption and implementation consideration to Ms. Rae Snyder, Senior Advisor. Thank you for assisting the IHS to better serve American Indian and Alaska Native people.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael H. Trujillo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "T".

Michael H. Trujillo, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.
Assistant Surgeon General
Director