

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 10, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

Thank you for the attention and priority you have given to the health and well-being of Native American communities during your time as Secretary. I know that improving access to quality care in Indian Country has been a genuine focus of yours, and I appreciate the collaborative approach you have brought to these issues. It is in that same spirit that I write today to ask for your help on a matter of great importance to the tribal communities in Southern Arizona.

Specifically, I am writing regarding the Indian Health Service's (IHS) proposal to eliminate the Tucson Area Office and consolidate its functions into the Phoenix Area Office. I represent Arizona's Sixth District, which borders tribal communities of Southern Arizona, and I have heard from tribal leaders, health care providers, and constituents who are concerned about what this change would mean for their access to care. I wanted to bring their perspective to your attention and ask that IHS take a closer look before moving forward.

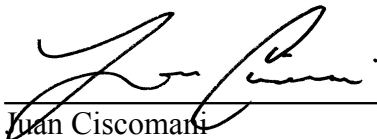
The Tucson Area Office coordinates health services for approximately 28,000 patients, the great majority of whom are tribal citizens of Southern Arizona. Under the proposed consolidation, administrative and oversight functions currently based in Tucson would move to Phoenix, which could require patients, tribal health staff, and administrators to travel more than 100 miles, and in some cases up to two hours, for services and support that are currently available locally. I have also heard concerns that specialized programs such as diabetes care could be disrupted as part of this reorganization.

Given your commitment to strengthening the federal government's relationship with tribal nations, I trust you share my belief that decisions of this magnitude should be made hand in hand with the tribes they affect, through full and meaningful government-to-government consultation. With that in mind, I would respectfully ask that IHS pause implementation of the proposed consolidation until a complete, formal consultation process has been carried out with the affected tribal nations of Southern Arizona. I would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your team on the path forward from there.

I know this Administration cares deeply about honoring our trust responsibility to tribal nations, and I am grateful for that commitment. Keeping the Tucson Area Office open and working closely with the affected tribal nations to resolve any legitimate operational concerns would be a meaningful way to put that commitment into action for the communities I represent.

Thank you again for your leadership on Native American health priorities, and for considering this request. I look forward to your response and would welcome the chance to discuss this further with you or your staff.

Sincerely,



Juan Ciscomani
Member of Congress