



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

March 2, 2021

Dear Tribal Leader:

On January 26th, President Biden issued a [Presidential Memorandum](#) on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening the Nation-to-Nation Relationships that requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to submit a detailed plan for implementing Executive Order 13175, which charges all executive departments and agencies to engage in *regular, meaningful, and robust* consultation with Tribal officials in the development of federal policies that have Tribal implications.

HHS takes its responsibility to consult with Tribal Governments seriously and first established the Department's Tribal Consultation Policy in 1997, with multiple revisions since its creation to facilitate better communication. The current HHS Tribal Consultation Policy is available at: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/agencies/iea/tribal-affairs/consultation>. HHS is also committed to working in partnership with Tribes and the Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC) that advises HHS on Department-wide processes and ensures Tribal guidance is incorporated into HHS priorities, policies, and the budget.

As the President's memorandum states, "History demonstrates that we best serve Native American people when Tribal governments are empowered to lead their communities, and when federal officials speak with and listen to Tribal leaders in formulating federal policy that affects Tribal Nations." To that end, HHS is seeking your recommendations and feedback on how we can improve the Department's policies, and practices to better engage with Indian Country through meaningful consultation. Consultation times, dates and links are below:

- **Monday, March 22, 2021** (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET): Regions 1, 2, 3, & 4
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlIf-iggzwtGGG9MjxYQxL-Hv2SMzW4o8w>
- **Monday, March 22, 2021** (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET): Region 5
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlIfuuhpz8qGxAsZdDUyRME08N8asCjN4Q>
- **Tuesday, March 23, 2021** (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET): Regions 7 & 8
https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlsc-ugqjgtHbAi2pqB_qylpKOAEGvIVfc
- **Wednesday, March 24, 2021** (10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. ET): Regions 6
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSfuCtqi0qGx-oQl9OXk-ZokbHPUDtqOk>
- **Wednesday, March 24, 2021** (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET): Region 9
<https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlSf-mpqTkjHZLcN-C1gdmtDhPja8PITm8>
- **Thursday, March 25, 2021** (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET): Region 10
https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJlscOuqqTovG_movjkRC7thDVJPGIk0PaA

Specific questions on which we welcome your feedback, are listed below.

1. How do we strengthen our Tribal Consultation Policy and Process across the Department to ensure all operating and staff divisions are responsive and engaging with Indian Country in a meaningful way?
2. How do we improve our communication and outreach regarding policy or program changes at the Department that impact Indian Tribes? Are there specific areas where Tribal officials would like more information or feel they are not getting adequate outreach to engage in a meaningful way?
3. How do we improve our annual regional Tribal Consultations? Should we continue to have sessions every year, or should we host national sessions?
4. What comments or concerns do you have that will help us improve HHS Tribal Consultation Policy?

Please send us your initial comments and recommendations no later than **March 26, 2021** to consultation@hhs.gov. This initial feedback will help guide us in next steps for further consultation later this year.

In addition to these comments, you may have feedback and suggestions on other issues; please do not hesitate to share those with us as well. This past year has been extraordinarily challenging as HHS and Indian Country worked together to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of this effort, there were instances where Tribal Consultation was held to seek rapid input and recommendations. I encourage you to share any recommendations or feedback as a result of our engagement with Indian Country during COVID-19 that will help strengthen our Consultation and Nation-to-Nation Relationship with Indian Tribes.

Information and feedback gathered at these sessions will be shared with the STAC and at the HHS Annual Tribal Budget Consultation on **April 6-7, 2021** when Tribal leaders will have further opportunity to make recommendations. For more information, please e-mail consultation@hhs.gov.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support. We take our commitment to honoring the Nation-to-Nation relationship with Indian Tribes very seriously, and look forward to continue working with you.

Sincerely,

Norris Cochran,
Acting Secretary