BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR URBAN AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES

The Seattle Indian Health Board bases their budget analysis and recommendations using a combination of methodologies used at our area and national IHS budget formulations, further incorporating an increase in the scope of the urban Indian health program line item.

1. APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST

$63.6 MILLION for FY2018
The IHS has recently expanded the Urban Indian Health Program, with 8 new sites joining the existing 33 urban Indian health organizations. This rapid expansion of services for urban AI/ANs was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in funding for the line item, putting a significant strain on all 41 urban Indian health centers.

$83.6 MILLION for FY2019
The Seattle Indian Health Board requests $83,641,242 in funding for IHS Urban Indian Health Programs in FY2019. This request is based on the IHS National Tribal Budget Formulation funding methodology. The tribes recognize the need for increased funding for the urban Indian health line item due to the addition of eight new UIHP sites.

2. SUPPORT THE URBAN INDIAN HEALTH PARITY ACT

Support H.R. 4443 and S. 2146
SIHB requests support for the Urban Indian Health Parity Act (H.R. 4443 and S. 2146) which will align urban Indian Medicaid reimbursement with the rest of the IHS and Tribal health system and reaffirm the federal Trust Responsibility to all American Indians and Alaska Natives.

3. $150 MILLION FOR OPIOIDS
SIHB supports the President’s FY2019 request for $150 million to combat the opioid epidemic and address serious mental illness. We support the Administration’s request to provide IHS with the funding necessary to provide opioid abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery throughout Indian county. AI/AN people had the highest drug overdose death rates in 2015, and the largest percentage change increase in drug overdose deaths from 1999-2015 of any population at 519 percent.1

4. IHS TASK FORCE
SIHB commends the House AI/AN Caucus for creating the House IHS Task Force. While we are awaiting the release of a white paper detailing the responsibilities and goals of the Task Force, we envision this body as an educational resource for House members and a legislative force for AI/AN health priorities. We hope to see a similar IHS Task Force created in the Senate that would play a complimentary role in educating Senators about Native health and advancing AI/AN legislative priorities such as fully funding the IHS and reducing health disparities among AI/AN people.

References.
1.President’s FY2019 Budget Request