



APR 27 2021

Dear Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am writing to initiate Urban Confer to seek your input and recommendations to improve the Indian Health Service (IHS) Policy on [Conferring with Urban Indian Organizations](#) (UIOs). Your input will improve the Agency’s policy and practices to better engage UIOs and conduct meaningful Urban Confer.

On March 23, 2010, as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Congress reauthorized and amended the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) 25 U.S.C. §§ 1601, et seq. Congress added a requirement that the IHS “confer,” to the maximum extent practicable, with UIOs in carrying out the IHCIA. 25 U.S.C. § 1660d(b). “Confer” means engagement in an open and free exchange of information and opinions leading to mutual understanding and comprehension and emphasizing trust, respect, and shared responsibility. § 1660d(a).

On September 22, 2014, the IHS established the Policy on “*Conferring with Urban Indian Organizations*,” in Part 5, Chapter 26, of the [Indian Health Manual](#) (IHM), which is consistent with the new IHCIA authority. The IHS Urban Confer Policy provides guidance for seeking input from Urban Indian Organization Leaders on Urban Indian health matters. This will ensure that Urban Indian health care needs are considered at the local, Area, and national levels, when implementing and carrying out the IHCIA.

**URBAN CONFER SESSION (VIRTUAL):** Please make plans to join us on *Wednesday, June 9, 2021*, for a virtual Urban Confer session. Urban Indian Organization Leaders are encouraged to provide comments and recommendations on how to improve the Urban Confer Policy and process.

<b>URBAN CONFER SESSION IHS URBAN CONFER POLICY AND PROCESS</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>	Wednesday, June 9, 2021
<b>TIME:</b>	2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., ET
<b>ZOOM INFORMATION:</b>	(833) 568-8864 <a href="https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1619982193">https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1619982193</a> Zoom Meeting ID: 161 998 2193

**WRITTEN COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Please send your comments and recommendations on the IHS Urban Confer Policy and process by **Tuesday, June 15, 2021**, as follows:

- By E-MAIL to: [urbanconfer@ihs.gov](mailto:urbanconfer@ihs.gov) - Subject line: **IHS Urban Confer Policy**.

I look forward to your feedback and recommendations regarding how we can improve the IHS Urban Confer Policy and process.

If you have questions, please contact CDR Shannon Beyale, Health System Specialist, Office of Urban Indian Health Programs, IHS, by telephone at (301) 945-3657, or by e-mail at [shannon.beyale@ihs.gov](mailto:shannon.beyale@ihs.gov).

Thank you for your support and partnership as we work to ensure the highest possible health status for Urban Indians.

Sincerely,

/Elizabeth A. Fowler/  
Acting Director