



FEB 27 2019

Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader:

I am pleased to announce the release of the Indian Health Service (IHS) Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023. The document is also available in the *Federal Register*. The IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023 reflects the comments received on the Draft IHS Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022 issued in the *Federal Register* on July 24, 2018 (see 83 FR 35012; July 24, 2018).

The IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023 includes a mission statement, a vision statement, and details how the IHS will achieve its mission through three strategic goals, eight objectives, and seventy strategies. The IHS received 123 comments on the Draft IHS Strategic Plan, including comments from virtual town hall Urban Indian Confer and Tribal Consultation sessions held on August 3, 2018, and August 6, 2018, respectively. I appreciate the input provided throughout the development of the IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023.

Based on the comments received, the IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023 includes minor language updates and an adjusted timeframe from FY 2018-2022 to FY 2019-2023, since the plan is being released during FY 2019 and covers a 5-year period. The IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023 includes more background information about the IHS and the relationship with Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations. A Response to Comments document is provided as an enclosure to this letter, which includes more information about the comments received and an Appendix of language changes between the draft and IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023.

Development of the IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023 included gathering stakeholder feedback on an ongoing basis. The IHS issued three versions of the Strategic Plan, including an initial draft framework, the Draft IHS Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022, and the IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023. Beginning in September 2017, the IHS gathered feedback from stakeholders on the initial draft framework. From November 2017 to February 2018, an IHS Strategic Planning Workgroup (Workgroup) reviewed comments on the initial draft framework and made recommendations for the Draft IHS Strategic Plan.

In July 2018, based on Workgroup recommendations and other stakeholder feedback, the Draft IHS Strategic Plan was published in the *Federal Register* for a 30-day comment period. In August 2018, the IHS National Combined Councils developed action plans for IHS senior leadership review on the eight objectives in the Draft Strategic Plan.

Thank you for your feedback, recommendations, and comments. Your contributions are invaluable. While the prior IHS Strategic Plan covered 2006-2011, the Indian health system has changed since that time. The IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023 aims to reflect our current reality and our future direction.

Every day we work to strengthen the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Our work is vital, and our mission is critical. I am inspired to achieve the plan's goals and objectives and work together with you in strengthening the Indian health system over the next 5 years.

Moving forward, the next phase of Strategic Plan implementation will be to develop and identify activities or charters for specific strategies to achieve the goals and objectives. The IHS will provide ongoing Strategic Plan updates to Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations. In the meantime, if you have any questions or feedback regarding the Strategic Plan, please send your comments by e-mail to [IHSStrategicPlan@ihs.gov](mailto:IHSStrategicPlan@ihs.gov).

More information about the IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023, including development and timeline is available on the IHS Strategic Plan Web site at <https://www.ihs.gov/strategicplan/>.

The IHS will continue to consult with Tribal Leaders and confer with Urban Indian Organization Leaders, and other stakeholders, as we work together to achieve the goals and objectives of the IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023. Thank you for your continued support and partnership with the IHS.

Sincerely,

/Michael D. Weahkee/

RADM Michael D. Weahkee, MBA, MHSA  
Assistant Surgeon General, U.S. Public Health Service  
Principal Deputy Director

Enclosures: IHS Strategic Plan FY 2019-2023  
Response to Comments on the Draft IHS Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022