

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2017

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, United States Senate
230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader McConnell,

As you move forward with plans to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, we write to express our grave concern for the impact to tribal citizens and communities who stand to be disproportionately affected. The ACA, while not perfect, has been a health and economic lifeline for thousands of individuals, families, and providers across Indian Country who have benefitted from increased access to coverage, choice, and consumer protections under the law.

The ACA includes critical improvements and investments in health care for American Indians and Alaska Natives, who have long faced wide health disparities and barriers to care. Chief among these achievements is the permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, which until the passage of the ACA had languished for over a decade awaiting reauthorization in Congress. Thanks to its permanent reauthorization, First American communities have benefitted from increased choice and lower out of pocket costs. In addition to expanded coverage and protections under the ACA, the IHCA has specifically worked to provide:

- Expanded programs for mental and behavioral health treatment and prevention, which are helping to curb the high rates of depression, substance abuse, and suicide on tribal lands.
- New authorities for facilitation of care for Indian veterans, whose community providers are now able to receive reimbursement from the VA for their care.
- Demonstration programs for health care provider shortages – especially critical in our rural communities where families stand to benefit from emerging models of care delivery like telemedicine.
- Expanded authorities for long-term care services, including home health care, assisted living and community-based care - providing needed support to caregivers.
- Expanded authorities for funding of patient travel costs – a critical component of care coordination for patients who must travel hundreds of miles to receive specialized care and treatment.
- New authorities for urban Indian health programs

Our constituents cannot afford to lose these vital, life-saving programs that are working to improve public health and lower costs across the board. Repealing the ACA without a feasible, bipartisan plan that upholds our commitments to Indian Country will only further widen the glaring health disparities that tribal communities face.

We stand ready and willing to work with you to address, improve, and expand access to affordable health care for all Americans, including our American Indian and Alaska Native brothers and sisters.

Sincerely,



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Tom Cole
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Member of Congress



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress




Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Don Young
Member of Congress



Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress