

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 29, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, Chair Pingree, and Ranking Member Joyce:

We write to urge your continued support for the Indian Health Service's (IHS) transition to a new electronic health record (EHR) by fully funding the FY 2023 President's budget request for this important program. The National Indian Health Board has listed electronic health record modernization as one of their top priorities for IHS and suggested \$355.8 million in FY23 appropriations.

As EHR modernization moves from planning to fruition, it is vitally important that appropriations continue to increase as appropriate to provide for its success. IHS has indicated that it will award a prime contract during the coming year, beginning modernization implementation. That necessarily means that appropriations for FY23 should be higher than for FY22.

While we ask that the Committee increase FY23 appropriations for this program from the FY22 level, there are fundamental considerations that should continue year-to-year. Therefore, we also ask that the Committee include a portion of its FY22 report language for IHS EHR modernization in its FY23 appropriations explanatory statement:

“The Committee urges IHS to continue moving forward with modernizing its aging EHR system by replacing it with a solution that is interoperable with the new EHR at the Department of Veterans Affairs and with systems purchased by Tribes and UIOs. Modernization should include robust Tribal consultation and planning to ensure that Tribes and UIOs are enabled to take full advantage of resulting modern health information technology and are not unduly burdened during this process. A modern system should increase security of patient data and promote efficiencies of care, empowering Tribal veterans who utilize care from both IHS and VA providers, and ensuring complete and accurate records of all IHS beneficiaries no matter where they receive care. The Committee is concerned about the disparate impact the COVID-19

pandemic has had on the health and well-being of AI/AN populations. It is important, therefore, that IHS consider options for deploying a population health data platform as a part of its modernization effort that can analyze EHR data and share resources and capabilities already available at other federal departments. In doing so, IHS can enhance its abilities to understand chronic conditions affecting IHS patient populations, research social determinants of health, and assist Tribal governments in building their public health infrastructure.”

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

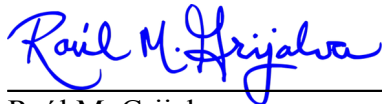
Sincerely,



Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



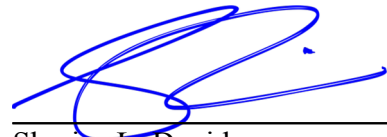
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
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Sharice L. Davids
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Jared Huffman
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Zoe Lofgren
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