



Nygren Urges Restoration of GIMC Funds During IHS Realignment Consultation



President Nygren addresses IHS leadership during the tribal consultation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Wednesday, July 23, 2025, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren participated in the Indian Health Service (“IHS”) Realignment Tribal Consultation in Washington, D.C. The consultation’s focus was to hear the input from tribes regarding the reorganization of IHS for the first time in over 20 years. IHS leadership, including Acting Director Benjamin Smith, attended the consultation and presented the progress of the reorganization plan completed throughout the last six months. This progress included interviews with leadership, as well as the creation of a series of goals for the product of this realignment.

During the consultation, President Nygren was able to directly address IHS leadership and took the opportunity to discuss the recent transfer of funds from the new Gallup Indian Medical Center (“GIMC”). At the beginning of July, President Nygren was informed by Senate staff that there was a change in the budget for the new GIMC project. Staff from the office disclosed that approximately \$54-57 million had been taken from GIMC funding and

reallocated to another site in Arizona. As President Nygren stated, this was done with "No letter, no call, no formal consultation with the Navajo Nation."

President Nygren continued that "This hospital project—something our people desperately need—was supposed to be kickstarted with that funding. Instead, I had to learn about this change from a third party, not IHS."

The current GIMC hospital is the oldest and largest serving IHS hospital in the country. In addition to the Navajo Nation, it also provides various services to Hopi, Zuni, Pueblos, Apache, and San Juan Pauite. President Nygren emphasized the need to return the funds to the new GIMC to prevent loss of life and challenged IHS to make this right. IHS Acting Director Benjamin Smith apologized for the lack of communication and stated that GIMC was still on the construction listing.

The tribal consultation in Washington, D.C., was the last of four in-person meetings held throughout the country (with the other consultations taking place in Seattle, Washington, Phoenix, Arizona, and Minneapolis, Minnesota), as well as a virtual Urban Confer that is scheduled for Monday, July 28, 2025. IHS leadership has collected comments from all these consultations and are accepting written submissions from tribal governments until August 28, 2025.