



February 6, 2023

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am contacting you to announce and initiate tribal consultation to gather your input and comments on draft recommendations for improving the process for federally recognized tribal governments – Indian Health Service (IHS) healthcare providers, Tribal Health Programs¹ (THPs), and Urban Indian Organizations² (UIOs) – to request federal assistance for medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and other appropriate federal departments and agencies to facilitate access to medical countermeasures and supplies that may be needed in a public health emergency.

On January 21, 2021, President Biden issued [Executive Order 14001](#) on a Sustainable Public Health Supply Chain, which directs actions to secure supplies necessary for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as future public health emergencies. The goal of Executive Order 14001 is to ensure critical medical supplies are available and remain available, to state, local, tribal, and territorial public health authorities in an emergency where local supplies are diminished and cannot be sourced from commercial distributors.

During public health emergencies, the SNS and other federal and military stockpiles serve as an essential supply chain buffer to meet the demands of state and local medical supplies and equipment when the commercial supply is strained or insufficient. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed vulnerabilities in the global medical supply chain that required the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to expand and enhance SNS's capability to respond to a nationwide emerging infectious disease that requires widespread use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

In response to Executive Order 14001, a working group led by the HHS Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR), in partnership with IHS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, other HHS offices, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security was formed. In the fall of 2021, I initiated tribal consultation to identify gaps in the request process for IHS, THP, and UIO providers, and recommendations on how to close such gaps to meet the needs of the COVID-19 response and future emergencies. Tribal input was invaluable as the working group developed the attached draft strategy on which we seek your input during this tribal consultation.

¹ 25 U.S.C. § 1603(25). The term “tribal health program” means an Indian tribe or tribal organization that operates any health program, service, function, activity, or facility funded, in whole or part, by the IHS through, or provided for in, a contract or compact with the IHS under the ISDEAA.

² 25 U.S.C. § 1603(29). The term “urban Indian organization” means a nonprofit corporate body situated in an urban center, governed by an urban Indian controlled board of directors, and providing for the maximum participation of all interested Indian groups and individuals, which body is capable of legally cooperating with other public and private entities for the purpose of performing the activities described in section 1653(a) of this title.

As part of this consultation, I welcome your input on the following questions:

1. Do the recommendations in the attached draft strategy describe request processes that improve the ability of federally recognized tribal governments, IHS providers, THPs, and UIOs to obtain timely and effective access to medical supplies held in the SNS and other federal stockpiles when needed during the pandemic or other future large-scale public health emergency?
2. Are there gaps or issues in the request processes described in the attached recommendations that must be addressed to enable federally recognized tribal governments, IHS providers, THPs, and UIOs to obtain timely and effective access to medical supplies held in the SNS and other federal stockpiles when needed during a pandemic or other future large-scale public health emergency?
3. What further recommendations do you have to improve the processes through which federally recognized tribal governments, IHS providers, THPs, and UIOs can request assistance to obtain timely and effective access to medical supplies held in the SNS and other federal stockpiles when needed during a pandemic or other future large-scale public health emergency?

TRIBAL CONSULTATION SESSION (VIRTUAL): I invite you to join us during the following virtual tribal consultation session to provide your input on how to improve the ASPR process for federally recognized tribal governments, IHS providers, THPs, and UIOs requesting federal assistance to access medical supplies SNS and other federal stockpiles:

TRIBAL CONSULTATION SESSION: ACCESS TO FEDERAL MEDICAL SUPPLIES	
DATE:	Monday, March 20, 2023
TIME:	2:00 – 4:00 PM ET
REGISTER HERE: https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJltcuutpjgsE8Y0z06e5nH1Vy8Cpz_ufjU	

WRITTEN COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Please send your comments and recommendations on ASPR's recommendations for streamlining the process for requesting federal assistance for medical supplies by **Monday, April 24, 2023.**

- By e-mail to: Consultation@HHS.gov
 - Please use the Subject Line: **Access to Federal Medical Supplies**

I look forward to your comments and recommendations. If you have questions, please contact us at tribalaffairs@hhs.gov. Thank you for your support and partnerships as we work to strengthen our Government-to-Government relationship.

Sincerely,



Dawn O'Connell