



June 13, 2016

The Honorable Kristi Noem
2422 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Letter of Support—HEALTTH Act

Dear Representative Noem,

It is with a sense of urgency that I share this letter of support on behalf of the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations (SDAHO) to express strong support of the *Helping Ensure Accountability, Leadership, and Trust in Tribal Healthcare (HEALTTH) Act of 2016*. The provision contain in the proposed legislation will provide much need improvements to a broken system of care.

For far too long, the delivery of health care services at Indian Health Services (IHS) hospitals to tribal communities in South Dakota has been unacceptable. IHS must meet the same quality, safety, and operational standards as all other hospitals, but repeatedly they have failed to do so. Tribal communities have had to endure substandard care and hardship, such as the closing of the Emergency Department (ED) at the facility in Rosebud, SD. The loss of this and other essential services is linked to poor health outcomes and even the loss of life. The current situation must be improved immediately!

In addition, the effects of the current dire situation have a profound impact on the State and region. SDAHO member hospitals are actively assisting, but have seen a dramatic increase in ED patient volumes and other services. These situations are unpredictable and difficult to manage. The legislation is urgently needed to ensure sustainable improvements are achieved.

Again, we support your innovative and forward thinking in introducing the HEALTTH Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Scott A. Duke'.

Scott A. Duke
President/CEO

Cc: Timothy Tracy, Chair, Board of Trustees