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June 9, 2016

The Honorable Kristi Noem
United States House of Representatives
2422 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Noem,

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) applauds your leadership in introducing the Helping Ensure Accountability, Leadership, and Trust in Tribal Healthcare (HEALTTH) Act. This important bill will ensure access to timely, quality care and expand hiring authority for the Indian Health Service (IHS).

NRHA is a national nonprofit membership organization with more than 21,000 members whose mission is to provide leadership on rural health issues. NRHA membership is made up of a diverse collection of individuals and organizations, all of whom share the common bond of ensuring all rural communities have access to quality, affordable health care.

American Indians endure persistent disparities in health services, including high uninsured rates, significant barriers to obtaining health services, and continued decline in health status. Decreased access to emergency care and higher wait times have led to increased death rates. By requiring the IHS to develop and implement standards to measure the timeliness of care at direct-service IHS facilities, access and wait-time for care can be greatly improved. We feel that these reforms are vital to the functionality and long-term viability of the IHS.

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call Erin Mahn Zumbrun or my government affairs staff at 202-639-0550 or by e-mail emahn@nrharural.org.

We thank you for sponsoring this important legislation. You are truly a stalwart champion for rural America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Morgan'.

Alan Morgan, CEO
National Rural Health Association