



May 2, 2019

The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Warren  
U.S. Senate  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Warren and Representative Cummings,

On behalf of the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH), which represents the 42 urban Indian organizations (UIOs) across the nation, we write in support of the Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act. Tragically, the opioid crisis has created this century's most devastating emergency in a growing and disproportionate substance abuse problem affecting American Indian and Alaskan Native (AI/AN) communities. The CDC reported that American Indians and Alaska Natives had the highest drug overdose death rates in 2015, compared to other racial and ethnic groups and just last year reported that the life expectancy across the United States dropped for the second year in a row – drug overdose being listed as the number one reason!

Currently, an estimated 78% of all American Indians/Alaska Natives live in urban settings, who are not immune to this public health crisis and increasingly seek substance use outpatient services, group therapy, and other services at urban Indian health programs. These programs are an integral part of the Indian health system, which is comprised of the IHS, Tribes, and tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations (collectively, I/T/Us). IHS, Tribes, and UIHPs, historically face serious budget constraints. Congress has long recognized that the federal government's obligation to provide health care for AI/AN people follows them off of reservations and this legislation would be critical to fulfilling the trust obligations to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people.

Many times critical funding, even when appropriated in equitable amounts, does not reach across AI/AN **urban** communities, largely in part because when **urban** Indians are not specifically mentioned in legislative language they are most often excluded or forced to prove their eligibility under the intent of the laws created.





NCUIH appreciates that the CARE Act has detailed specific language that ensures **urban** Indian organizations are listed as an eligible entity in this important legislative act.

We look forward to continuing to work together in this important matter and ensuring the needs of the urban American Indian and Alaska Native people across this nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maureen Rosette".

Maureen Rosette  
President  
National Council of Urban Indian Health

