

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 1, 2026

Clayton W. Fulton  
Chief of Staff  
(Delegated Authority of the Director)  
Indian Health Service  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Mr. Fulton:

We write to express our serious concerns regarding the recently announced proposal to eliminate the Tucson Area Office by merging it with the Phoenix Area as part of the Indian Health Service's broader realignment initiative. We ask that you immediately suspend implementation of the merger until you have clarified any impact this consolidation will have on the tribal nations in Southern Arizona and have completed meaningful, formal tribal consultation.

We echo the critical concerns raised by the Tohono O'odham Nation in its February 19, 2026, consultation response. The Tucson Area Office facilitates essential health services for nearly 28,000 patients<sup>1</sup> in coordination with the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and Tohono O'odham Nation. Merging these offices will require patients and staff to travel as long as two hours to visit the closest Area Office, exacerbating bureaucratic delays, communication failures, and service disruptions. The Tucson Office also provides specialized, local services, including dedicated Area Diabetes Consultants which the Phoenix office may be unable to replicate.

It remains unclear how the Tucson Area Office, the only office that would be consolidated through this initiative, was selected for consolidation and whether the repercussions of this decision have been fully considered. We request a comprehensive written response from your office addressing how IHS plans to mitigate any service or tribal consultation gaps before further realignment actions proceed. To that end, please respond to the following questions by June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026:

1. What specific criteria led to the selection of the Tucson Area Office?
2. How did your agency engage in formal consultation with both the Pasqua Yaqui Tribe and Tohono O'odham Nation, and how was their feedback incorporated into the final proposal?
3. How will your agency ensure that closing the Tucson Area Office does not result in the loss of the Tohono O'odham Nation's representation on key regional Tribal Advisory Committees (TACs), including the CDC TAC, the HRSA TAC, the HHS Secretary's TAC, and the Facilities Appropriations Advisory Board?
4. What plans are in place to ensure that this reorganization will not impact on-site technical assistance for facilities based in the Tucson area?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ihs.gov/tucson/aboutus/>

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We look forward to receiving a detailed explanation of how your agency plans to ensure continued quality of care, support tribal self-determination and self-governance, and uphold its trust obligations to the tribes of Southern Arizona, in keeping with federal law, including the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act and the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

Sincerely,



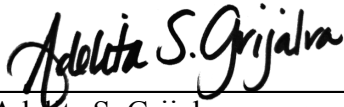
Ruben Gallego

United States Senator



Mark Kelly

United States Senator



Adelta S. Grijalva

Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201