



February 12, 2019

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

The Honorable Senator Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators,

On behalf of the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) and the Urban Indian Health Programs (UIHPs) we represent, we strongly support the Native American Suicide Prevention Act (Act).

This Act will promote collaboration between states and urban Indian communities, as well as tribal organizations, in an effort to address the suicide crisis that exists in Indian Country. The Act will require states and their designees receiving grants for development and implementation of statewide suicide early intervention to work with the Indian health care systems in their state. This is critical to help address the significantly high and disparate rate of suicide in Indian Country; for instance, the American Indian / Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth suicide rate is 2.5 times as high as the overall national average, making these rates the highest across all population groups. Despite these alarming statistics, Native communities are often neglected with regards to the development of suicide prevention strategies. Therefore, this Act will strengthen the planning and input within AI/AN communities in hopes of reducing the suicide crisis that exists. Urban Indians are confronted with an array of dire threats to their physical and mental health and wellbeing, with suicide among the most prevalent.

At NCUIH, we represent all of the Urban Indian Health Programs (UIHPs) within the Indian Health System (IHS, Tribal facilities, and UIHPs), which are spread out in 22 states. UIHPs depend heavily on the funding received under the urban Indian line item of the IHS budget. This bill is therefore critical to strengthening the U.S. trust responsibility for the provision of health care to all AI/AN people and ensuring that these communities have a say in issues that are prevalent in their communities, such as suicide.

If you have any questions, please email Francys Crevier, NCUIH Executive Director, FCrevier@ncuih.org, or Julia Dreyer, NCUIH Director of Federal Relations, at JDreyer@ncuih.org or call (202)544-0344.

Sincerely,

Francys Crevier
Executive Director

