



**Seattle Indian Health Board**

*For the Love of Native People*

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Esther Lucero  
CEO & President  
Seattle Indian Health Board

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warren,

On behalf of the Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB), we are writing to express our support for the Comprehensive Addiction Resources Emergency (CARE) Act of 2021. The CARE Act would provide critical support on our efforts to stem the tide of overdoses and fatalities that have disproportionately affected the American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has spiked opioid use across the nation and according to the Centers for Disease Control the opioid overdose rate for American Indian and Alaska Native people is 13.7 per 100,000. According to a report by the Northwest Tribal Epidemiology Center, drug and alcohol-associated deaths accounted for 31.3% of all deaths among American Indian and Alaska Native people in Washington State from 2006-2010. In 2020, 28% of SIHB patients utilized our Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services. Despite our efforts on the front lines, funding for opioid prevention and response is limited.

To address our rising concerns, the CARE Act will support Native communities throughout the country that have been disproportionately affected by the opioid epidemic. This legislation justly upholds the Federal Trust responsibility by providing direct funding to tribes and urban Indian organizations that are leading the response on this crisis. Specifically, the CARE act supports early interventions for patients of urban Indian organizations. To address Native communities' unique circumstances, the bill supports conferring with tribes and urban Indian organizations to develop and implement strategies that improve surveillance and reporting of fatal overdose deaths among American Indian and Alaska Native people. Furthermore, the bill is inclusive of urban Indian organizations eligibility on the SUD treatment and services council supporting an equity-based approach.

The CARE Act will ultimately improve the effectiveness and efficiency of allocating resources to reach individuals struggling with addiction. Tribes and urban Indian organizations are well-positioned to facilitate solutions for our communities. If we can provide any additional information in support of this request, please contact us using the information below.

Sincerely,

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