

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 13, 2025

Mark Cruz
Senior Advisor to the Secretary
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Mr. Cruz,

We remain extremely concerned by the devastating impacts of the Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) policies on primary and emergency care services at Gallup Indian Medical Center (GIMC) in Gallup, New Mexico.

President Trump's February 26th Executive Order, entitled "Implementing the President's 'Department of Government Efficiency's Cost Efficiency Initiative,'" instituted the Presidential Appointee Approver and Departmental Efficiency Review (PAA DER) process. It requires all Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities to have all contracts and related expenses approved by the Acting Director of IHS. And it was implemented without necessary technical assistance or guidance to health facilities.

As you know, IHS relies heavily on contracts for everything, from lab work to paying travel doctors and nurses. Prior to the implementation of this new policy, approvals for contracts were largely done locally at the hospital.

The new policy has dramatically and dangerously slowed down care at GIMC and brought some essential services to a halt entirely. While you have publicly stated that it "has not interrupted the IHS's ability to fulfill any responsibilities," our offices have received numerous reports to the contrary. Specifically, we understand that GIMC has slashed the number of beds available and scaled back maternal and emergency care.

The inherent sovereignty of Tribes is recognized in the U.S. Constitution, in treaties, and across many federal laws and policies, and it has been consistently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. These trust and treaty obligations require the federal government to adequately fund and staff IHS hospitals, including GIMC.

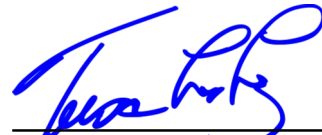
We extend an invitation to you to visit GIMC. While in Gallup, you can hear firsthand from local leaders, patients, health care providers, Tribal officials, and community members about the situation at the hospital. And you can see how bureaucratic red tape is limiting access to essential health care services in this community.

We look forward to hearing back from you and joining you at GIMC.

Sincerely,



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress