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September 3, 2014

Representative Don Young
Chairman of the House Natural Resources
Subcommittee for Indian and Alaska Native Affairs
United States House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative Young:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express our support for H.R. 3229, the “Indian Health Service Advance Appropriations Act of 2013.” This legislation would allow the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Indian Health Facilities Accounts to receive advance appropriations, which we believe would protect IHS’ direct service units from cash flow problems that regularly occur at the start of the fiscal year due to delays in enactment of annual appropriations legislation.

American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) suffer disproportionately from a variety of health afflictions, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and tuberculosis. Addressing the health disparities experienced in the AI/AN population is made more difficult by both the lack of adequate funding for the IHS—according to the National Indian Health Board, the IHS continues to be chronically underfunded—and the delays in such funding. Adopting advance appropriations for IHS would allow tribal health administrators to continue treating patients without worrying about, if or when funding would be available, and enable improved budgeting, recruitment and retention, provision of services, facility maintenance, and construction efforts.

Thank you for your leadership in introducing H.R. 3229.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD