

Congressman Eliot L. Engel  
Statement for the Record  
“Addressing the Urgent Needs of Our Tribal Communities”  
July 8, 2020

Thank you Chairman Pallone for holding today’s important hearing on the challenges faced by Tribal communities across the United States.

There are currently eight federally recognized Indian tribes in my home state of New York.

Like many New York communities, they have been greatly affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

This public health crisis has brought to light the systemic inequities and barriers that Tribal communities face in accessing high-quality health care, from chronically underfunded health systems to the absence of robust public health infrastructure.

The federal government needs to immediately address these shortcomings as required by the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, which this committee helped enact as part of the Affordable Care Act.

As this committee examines proactive steps to improve health care for Native Americans, we should consider how can advance transformative legislation that addresses the social determinants of health, including access to safe, affordable housing and proper sanitation systems.