

Questions for the Record by Republican Members

Questions from Rep. Rosendale for Dr. Grim D.D.S, M.H.S.A., Secretary of the Department of Health for the Chickasaw Nation:

1. \$30 billion was provided to Indian Country through the American Rescue Plan Act. In Montana specifically, there is a need to close the digital divide. The lack of broadband access across Indian country has been a paramount issue during the pandemic. According to the FCC, tribal lands are 4.5 times more likely to lack any terrestrial broadband internet access opposed to those on non-tribal lands. Dr. Grim, how can these funds be used to close the digital divide to ensure tribal patients are able to access telehealth and tribal students are able to access the same distance learning opportunities available to other Americans?
2. How can congress provide oversight to ensure funds are being spent to close the digital divide to prevent waste and fraud?
3. Are there statutory limitations for the expansion of telehealth services that the tribe is encountering?
4. Congress has increased IHS Funding every year since 2010 and Congress has provided robust funding to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, many IHS facilities have been plagued by extremely low-quality healthcare and some offices have been accused of impropriety, nepotism and corruption. This is simply unacceptable, Congress must provide oversight to ensure our tribal communities have access to adequate healthcare, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Dr. Grim, how can we ensure our tribal communities have access to high, quality healthcare to combat the COVID-19 Pandemic and on an ongoing basis to provide preventative care?
5. Dr. Grim, I am greatly concerned about the effects of COVID-19 on tribal communities, especially regarding mental health. We have seen a rise in drug use and drug overdose and there is a need for inpatient addiction treatment facilities to help compact the mental health crisis that has arisen. Has there been any consideration as to the needs of combating the mental health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic?