



COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES

Blackfeet Nation • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation
Crow Nation • Duck Valley Indian Reservation Eastern Shoshone Tribe
Fort Belknap Indian Community • Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation • Navajo Nation • Northern Arapaho Tribe
Oglala Sioux Tribe • Rosebud Sioux Tribe • Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe
Shoshone-Bannock Tribes • Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation
Spokane Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe • Walker River Paiute

March 20, 2024

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chairman
Committee on Indian Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Vice Chairwoman
Committee on Indian Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Schatz and Vice Chairwoman Murkowski,

The Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT) is writing to request a hearing on Native Americans and HIV/AIDS. As you know, is a federally-chartered intertribal advocacy organization. COLT consists of tribes that have a land base of 100,000 acres or more, of which, of the 574 federally recognized tribes, only 51 tribes meet this criterion, and these tribes control 95 percent of tribal lands and consist of one half of the Native population. COLT is a unified advocacy base for large land base tribes. We believe that HIV/AIDS is an important topic and, to our knowledge, has not been examined by the United States Congress. We think it is time for such a hearing.

In 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) found 221 new diagnoses of HIV Native Americans. The CDC also found that for every 100 Native people with HIV, 80 knew their HIV status. Native people face barriers of health care access, HIV stigma, homophobia and poverty.

This is a critical moment in the HIV epidemic and we cannot end the epidemic without addressing the specific needs of all affected communities. Coupled with ravaging opioid addiction, we also know that Native people are contracting HIV through needle sharing. We are living, often in the center, amidst several public health crises of opioid addiction, unsheltered relatives and HIV.

We look forward to hearing from you and to working with your good offices to bring about the end of this epidemic within Native communities.

Indigenously,

Cc: The Honorable Tom Cole, Co-Chair, Native American Caucus
The Honorable Sharice Davids, Co-Chair Native American Caucus