



December 4, 2023

Dear Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council and American Indian Health Leaders,

Thank you for writing me and expressing your support for, and suggestions related to, our Tribal Relations Manager role at the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). I recognize that this position has been critical to improving communication and working relationships between DPHHS and Tribal Governments, as well as improving health care and public health efforts in Montana Native communities.

Please know that I remain steadfastly committed to maintaining the duties and responsibilities previously overseen by the Tribal Relations Manager at DPHHS. To clarify, we are not seeking to eliminate the duties and responsibilities held by this position. Rather, we are seizing an opportunity to reevaluate the Department's organizational structure with service to Montana Native communities top of mind. Maintaining a strong working relationship with you on behalf of those that we collectively serve is of the utmost importance to me.

On that note, DPHHS's relationship with the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council (RMTLC) and the American Indian Health Leaders (AIHL) is vital to our mission of serving all Montanans in their communities to improve health, safety, and well-being, and to empower independence. To that end, my objective is to shift the duties and responsibilities of the Tribal Relations Manager into our existing Office of American Indian Health (OAIH), led by DPHHS's American Indian Health Director, Stephanie Iron Shooter, as we collaborate with you to continue building and strengthening OAIH. OAIH is part of our Director's Office and has oversight from, and regular interaction with, both my executive leadership team and me.

Through this organizational change, I ultimately strive to improve both internal and external communications, drive efficiencies, and build on the progress noted in your letter to continuously better our tribal support. I **welcome your counsel and input as DPHHS moves forward with developing a robust OAIH team that is dedicated to excellent service.**

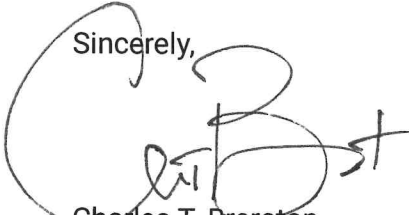
I am confident that housing the duties and responsibilities of the Tribal Relations Manager within OAIH and under the leadership of our American Indian Health Director will reduce confusion about these two roles which previously existed in parallel yet disparately, as well as unite our efforts to meet your health and human services needs.

Through this new organizational structure, DPHHS commits to continuing to communicate key program and policy changes through tribal consultations, of which we find tremendous value. I also assure you that the American Indian Health Director and DPHHS staff will continue visiting reservations, Urban Indian Centers, Urban Indian Health providers, and other stakeholders on a regular basis.

Alongside you and my team, I commit to continuing to address and improve health disparities, behavioral health, child and adult protective services, Medicaid, and other issues facing Montana Native communities.

I appreciate your patience and engagement during this transition period and look forward to future dialogue and continued partnership with both RMTLC and AIHL.

Sincerely,



Charles T. Brereton
Director