



## WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

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To All Interested Parties:

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the urbanization of Indians steadily increased. Urban American Indians now represent the largest segment of Indian people in the nation yet, because they live in large metropolitan areas, their unique healthcare needs go unnoticed or unaddressed.

Targeted federal efforts to address urban Indians' healthcare issues have fallen short. Recent studies have shown that urban Indians experience severe health disparities and have difficulty gaining access to needed health care.

A recent report, *Invisible Tribes: Urban Indians and Their Health in a Changing World*, illustrates the importance of assuring that urban Indians are not overlooked in planning efforts to address health disparities. The report was released by the Urban Indian Health Commission, a group organized by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Seattle Indian Health Board. The report highlights some of the urban Indian healthcare disparities and it urges all levels of government and private philanthropy to work together to help reduce these disparities.

As lead Governors for the Western Governors' Association and on behalf of our colleagues, we extend our hand in helping assure that all Americans, including urban Indians, receive the health care they need. We applaud the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for supporting this effort and thank the members of the Urban Indian Health Commission for bringing this matter to the public's attention.

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor of Washington  
Lead Governor AI/AN Health

M. Michael Rounds  
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