STATE OF MONTANA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 06-2015

EXECUTIVE ORDER ESTABLISHING A STATE OFFICE OF AMERICAN INDIAN HEALTH

WHEREAS, all Montanans deserve the opportunity to live healthy and productive lives;

WHEREAS, on average, the lifespan of American Indians in Montana is twenty years less than their non-Indian neighbors, friends, and coworkers;

WHEREAS, American Indians are significantly more likely to suffer from cardiovascular disease, cancer, and respiratory illness;

WHEREAS, too many American Indian families are losing entire generations and experiencing the tragedy of burying both their elderly and their youth too early;

WHEREAS, health disparities are resulting in lost wisdom, experience, and productivity throughout Montana;

WHEREAS, the current health care delivery system in Indian Country limits access to preventative care and quality health care services and providers;

WHEREAS, the State of Montana has an important role in protecting the health and safety of all Montanans;

WHEREAS, addressing health disparities will improve the families, communities, and economy of Montana;

WHEREAS, addressing health disparities will require a collective effort and partnership among the State of Montana, Montana Tribal Nations, other committed stakeholders, and the federal government, which has a primary trust responsibility to provide health care to American Indians; and,

WHEREAS, a coalition of tribal health care directors representing each of their nations has committed to being active partners with the state in addressing these health disparities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, STEVE BULLOCK, Governor of the State of Montana, by virtue of the authority vested in me under the laws and Constitution of the State of Montana, do hereby **ORDER AND DIRECT:** The Department of Public Health and Humans Services (DPHHS) to create an Office of American Indian Health within the Director's Office of DPHHS.

The Office of American Indian Health will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the development and implementation of an action plan that identifies specific factors contributing to health disparities and strategies DPHHS will pursue for addressing those factors;

- Coordinating efforts within DPHHS branches and divisions to develop, implement, and monitor strategies that reduce health disparities;

- Establishing regular and consistent opportunities for consultations with and input from tribal government leaders, tribal health leaders, urban Indian health centers, American Indian health experts, federal government agency representatives and other stakeholders committed to reducing health disparities in Indian Country;

- Coordinating efforts with other State agencies whose work is critical to reducing health disparities through policies and practices that address social determinants of health in areas such as commerce, insurance, housing, transportation, criminal justice, and education;

- Identifying and developing a list of eligible state programs that are accessible to tribal health programs and communicating such information directly to tribal representatives; and,

- Providing annual updates on actions taken and progress made in reducing disparities in American Indian health.

The Order is effective immediately.

GIVEN under my hand and the GREAT SEAL of the State of Montana this 16th day of June 2015.

STEVE BULLOCK, Governor

ATTEST:

LINDA MCCULLOCH, Secretary of State