

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Supports reintroduction of bipartisan, bicameral bill to guarantee tribal health authorities access to the Strategic National Stockpile

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*Indian Health Service and other tribal health organizations currently lack guaranteed, direct access to federal repository of drugs and medical supplies for emergencies*

*Legislation would allow the Indian Health Service, tribal health authorities, and urban Indian organizations to access the Strategic National Stockpile and help combat the COVID-19 pandemic*

Washington, D.C. – United States Senator Tammy Baldwin is supporting the reintroduction of the *Tribal Medical Supplies Stockpile Access Act*. The bipartisan and bicameral legislation would guarantee that the Indian Health Service (IHS), tribal health authorities, and urban Indian organizations have access to the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), a federal repository of drugs and medical supplies that can be tapped if a public health emergency could exhaust local supplies.

Currently, IHS and tribal health authorities' access to the SNS is limited and is not guaranteed in the SNS statute. In contrast, states' and large municipalities' public health authorities have ready, direct access to the SNS.

“The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic demands that our tribal communities in

Wisconsin have direct access to critical medical supplies, medications, and equipment that can save lives,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “The *Tribal Medical Supplies Stockpile Access Act* will support our Native communities, prevent supply shortages, and reduce health disparities that this pandemic has exposed.”

“Tribes have been exercising self-governance and self-determination for hundreds of years, and tribal governments have proven time and again that we have the ability to self-govern,” **said Tehassi Hill, Oneida Nation Chairman.** “Given the dramatic health disparities in our communities, it is beyond the pale that we still do not have direct access to the lifesaving resources from the national stockpile. I am grateful for Senator Baldwin’s decision to support this bill. She has always been a vocal defender of our sovereignty and used her time in the Senate to address long-standing inequities such as those that would be remedied by the Tribal Medical Supplies Stockpile Access Act.”

The *Tribal Medical Supplies Stockpile Access Act* was reintroduced by Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Representatives Tom Cole (R-OK), Co-Chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus, and Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), a member of the Congressional Native American Caucus. The legislation is cosponsored by Senators Tina Smith (D-MN), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and Representative Sharice Davids (D-KS), Co-Chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus.

The *Tribal Medical Supplies Stockpile Access Act* is supported by the National Indian Health Board, the National Congress of American Indians, the National Council of Urban Indian Health, United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund, Seattle Indian Health Board, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).