Dear Senator / Representative

I have enclosed the book *Magic and Tragic Rosebud* by Nancy Palker with the hope that you or your staff will take the time to read it and see how the chronic underfunding of the Indian Health Service impacts daily life in our neediest pockets of America. This is a captivating account of a young nurse working for the US Public Health Service / Indian Health at South Dakota’s Lakota Sioux Rosebud Reservation hospital, struggling to stay afloat financially in 1973-4, with an update in 2016. 1973 was a turbulent time. Members of the American Indian Movement at nearby Wounded Knee had precipitated an armed standoff with the FBI. Racial tensions ran high. Nancy Palker, her colleagues, and her friends on the reservation navigated day-to-day stresses together with humor and by exploring the Lakota culture. In the spring of 1974, the hospital ran out of funds, with no disposable supplies – no paper towels for handwashing, no paper cups to give meds, no surgical dressings, very limited lab reagents and X-ray supplies, with resulting loss of patient lives. This was not an isolated event, but a recurring one.

Nancy returned to the Badlands and to Rosebud in 2016 to find that the Rosebud reservation and hospital continue to struggle socially and economically. A man’s life expectancy in Rosebud is 47 years. In Haiti it’s 48. The US average is 77 years.

The Indian Health Service has been underfunded since its inception in 1955, allotting less per capita than the US prison system. Whenever Congress approves inadequate funds, and with each government shutdown, people suffer and lives are lost. This book is full of stories of how the understaffing and underfunding affect these people. Quality of care issues in the Great Plains division of the Indian Health Service have resulted in closure of entire departments of the hospitals for months. During these times, patients must travel an additional hour to the next nearest hospital (with heart attacks, hemorrhages, childbirth) resulting in additional fatalities.

Please help raise awareness (rosebudbook.com), improve funding and give all Americans the quality of health care that we deserve. Thank you for your time and attention in this matter.

Sincerely,