

Agnew Says Funds to Be Had By the Indian Health Service

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew this week announced that \$1,957,000 will be released to the Indian Health Service of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

The action came after a request by the Indian members of the National Council on Indian Opportunity, which is chaired by

the Vice President.

At a full meeting of the Council in the White House on January 26, the Indian Council members urged that the budget and personnel freeze in effect on Indian health services be relaxed in order that the critical health needs of Indian people be met.

The Vice President directed

that this request, along with a number of others in such areas as education, welfare and economic development, be reviewed and that appropriate responses be made by the Federal agencies concerned within 30 days.

HEW Secretary Robert H. Finch reported to the Vice President that, following a re-examination of Indian health appropriations, HEW will free the nearly \$2 million for this vital function.

The Vice President stated that the health of Indian people had lagged far behind that of the rest of the population and that every possible effort must be expended to improve the situation.

President Nixon has proposed in the fiscal 1971 budget a net increase of \$9,200,000 for Indian health services over the 1970 budget.

The Council, composed of the Vice President, six Indian members and seven Cabinet officers, advises the President of Federal Indian policies and programs.

Of the total amount being released from reserves, \$957,000 will be used to purchase needed medical supplies for the Indian health program and \$1 million will be used for increased medical care in contract facilities.

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