

A Toolkit for Native Youth and Their Health Care Future

Category: News

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Much of our native youth in tribal communities visit an Indian Health Service (IHS) facility for their health care needs – just like their parents, grandparents, and other family members. For some, the only health care system they are familiar with is IHS. With the passing of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010, the law opened up more options and benefits for American Indian and Alaska Native adults and children through the Health Insurance Marketplace and Medicaid Expansion. But, what should native youth know about the ACA and why should they know it?

Through the IHS National Indian Health Outreach and Education (NIHOE) funding, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) created a new “Affordable Care Act Toolkit for Native Youth.” The toolkit includes posters, brochures, and a video highlighting the benefits for youth through the ACA, like free immunizations and preventive screenings; the ability to stay on a parent’s insurance until age 26; and continuing to use IHS with their new coverage.

The toolkit materials feature participants from the 2015 NIHB Youth Summit held in Washington, DC. The youth were filmed visiting with Members of Congress, interacting with policy officials, and learning about tribal health care reform from top leaders. The video also includes some of the youth in their home communities reflecting on their experiences in the nation’s capital and the importance of quality health care for themselves and their families.

It’s important to educate native youth about their health care options through the Marketplace, Medicaid, or other federal health programs. For our IHS patients, having coverage means having more options. This is particularly important for our youth as they are our future leaders and investing in their health now also means investing in their future healthy lifestyle choices. IHS and NIHB are committed to advancing positive healthy outcomes for all American Indian and Alaska Native youth.

The objectives of this new toolkit are: to introduce native youth to the benefits of the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and health insurance coverage; encourage native youth to learn more about concepts of the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, and health insurance coverage from their local IHS Patient Benefits Coordinator or enrollment assister entities; and engage native youth to become advocates and resources for tribal health care reform for a healthier Indian Country.

To learn more about the Affordable Care Act Toolkit for Native Youth, visit the [IHS Affordable Care Act website](#). For information about the ACA benefits for American Indians and Alaska Natives, visit the [Marketplace Tribal Resources website](#).