

PRESS RELEASE: House Interior Appropriations Bill Advances to the Full Committee with NCUIH Request of \$81 Million for Urban Indian Health

Category: Press Release

written by Meredith Raimondi | May 16, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Meredith Raimondi
Manager, Communications & Events
National Council of Urban Indian Health
202-544-0344
mraimondi@ncuih.org

House Interior Appropriations Bill Advances to the Full Committee with NCUIH Request of \$81 Million for Urban Indian Health

Chair Betty McCollum's draft bill that advanced to full committee includes a \$30 million increase to the urban Indian health line item.

Washington, DC (May 16, 2019) — Yesterday, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies approved by voice vote its fiscal year 2020 bill with the National Council of Urban Indian Health's request of an increase for the urban Indian health line item to \$81 million. The fiscal year 2020 bill draft from Chair Betty McCollum includes this increase of approximately \$30 million for the urban Indian health line item from current funding levels and a \$537 million increase to \$6.3 billion for the Indian Health Service overall budget from fiscal year 2019.

Chair McCollum's bill incorporates a solution of addressing the unmet needs of urban Indians by increasing the overall IHS budget without taking away any money from Tribes. This needed increase would allow the 42 Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) to hire more staff, expand vital services from behavioral health to substance misuse programs, and improve health outcomes for the growing demand of health care for urban Indians.

"NCUIH applauds the leadership of Chair Betty McCollum and her longstanding commitment to fulfilling the trust and treaty responsibilities of the US government with American Indians and Alaska Natives by investing in the Indian Health Service and urban Indian health programs. After years of stagnation and chronic underfunding to urban Indian health and the Indian Health Service (IHS) budget, NCUIH is hopeful that Chair McCollum's bill requesting \$6.3 billion for IHS, which is higher than the proposed budget by the President of \$5.9 billion, and \$81 million for urban Indian health will continue to move forward for consideration by the full House," said NCUIH Executive Director Francys Crevier.

“This bill continues our subcommittee’s nonpartisan approach to addressing issues facing our Native American brothers and sisters. I am committed to honoring our trust and treaty obligations,” said Chair McCollum in her opening remarks during yesterday’s hearing.

“We strongly agree on Indian Country. It’s a testament to [Chair McCollum] and the rest of the members on this subcommittee that we continue our nonpartisan approach to programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives which constitute roughly a quarter of this bill. In this often hyper partisan environment, the work we do together on behalf of Indian Country is a welcome change.” said Ranking Member Dave Joyce during his opening remarks before the bill was approved.

Earlier this year, NCUIH President Maureen Rosette testified before the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee for this increase of the urban Indian line item to a total of at least \$81 million. NCUIH also sent a [letter](#) to all Members of Congress with facilities in their districts to support higher funding for urban Indian health. 16 Members of Congress signed the [final letter](#), led by Rep. Raul Grijalva, to the Interior Appropriations Committee, in support at least \$81 million for the urban Indian health line item.

The increased funding would be critical to the 42 UIOs across the country. These UIOs an integral part of the Indian health system, which is comprised of the IHS, federally recognized Tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations (I/T/Us). UIOs provide culturally-competent healthcare to approximately 70% of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) living in urban settings. UIOs are on the front lines in assisting the federal government in providing for the health and well-being of urban Indians.

The full text of the bill is [here](#). The bill next heads to the full Committee for markup.

###

About the National Council of Urban Indian Health (<https://ncuih.org>)

The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is the only national organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally-competent health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban settings. NCUIH envisions a nation where comprehensive, culturally competent personal and public health services are available and accessible to AI/ANs living in urban communities throughout the United States. NCUIH is the only organization that represents all 42 Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) federally funded by the Indian Health Service.