

# **PRESS RELEASE: NCUIH Urges Congress to Include Urban Indians in any Efforts to Address Coronavirus**

Category: Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Urban Indian Organizations must be explicitly included in emergency funding.**

**Washington, DC (March 2, 2020)** - The National Council of Urban Indian Health has requested that Congress honor the United States trust responsibility to urban Indians by passing emergency funding that includes Urban Indian Organizations for the prevention and treatment of the Coronavirus -Covid 19 risk. In its letter, NCUIH requested:

- At the very least \$94 million for emergency funding and health education/promotion for UIOs.
- Include the term "Urban Indian Organization" in legislation to ensure the funding goes to those programs because often times if Urban Indian Organizations are not explicitly mentioned, they are forgotten. Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) are one of the three components of the Indian Health Service health care delivery system, Indian Health/Tribal/Urban Organizations (I/T/U) - yet UIOs have received no support for other potential epidemics, like Zika virus.

"As Congress moves forward on its consideration of funding for the Coronavirus-Covid 19, NCUIH would like to ensure that funds are available to our 41 urban Indian organizations. The U.S. government cannot allow UIO patients to die during a Covid 19 outbreak due to unavailability of critical services. UIOs operate on such low funding margins that interruptions in daily operations (including those leading to funding shortfalls) have dire effects and have been forced to close entirely," said Francys Crevier, Executive Director of NCUIH.

According to the World Health Organization, the coronavirus has reached more than 30 countries and is expected to cause major strain upon the United States medical health care delivery system. More than 70% of American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) reside in urban or suburban areas (i.e. urban Indians). Data has shown that AI/AN people already have a disproportionate burden of infectious disease morbidity compared with the general U.S. population - including influenza.

UIOs provide culturally-competent healthcare to AI/AN patients, however they are forced to operate on such low funding margins that interruptions in daily operations have dire effects, even leading to death of AI/AN patients. In order to effectively prevent the spread of the Coronavirus - Covid 19, test and treat AI/AN patients, UIOs must be included in the emergency or supplemental budget.

- [One Pager on UIO Needs for Coronavirus Response](#)
- [NCUIH Letter to Congress on Coronavirus](#)

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