

PRESS RELEASE: Senate Clears COVID-19 Testing Package, President Expected to Sign

Category: Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The bill includes \$750 million to Indian Country for COVID-19 testing and response.

Washington, DC (April 23, 2020) – On April 21, 2020, [H.R. 266](#), the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, passed the Senate by voice vote. The bill is now in the House of Representatives and is on track to pass today. The President has indicated he will sign the bill.

“As our urban Indian organizations (UIOs) have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis from day 1, we are grateful for the inclusion of Tribes and urban Indians in the most recent legislation. We appreciate a continued commitment to Indian Country by Leader Chuck Schumer. We hope that the government acts swiftly to provide these life-saving tests and resources to our programs on the ground. We will continue to work with our national partner organizations NIHB and NCAI to push for [more assistance in the next package](#), “said Francys Crevier.

The bill includes \$25 billion for COVID-19 testing with **not less than \$11 billion** to states, local territories, tribes, tribal organizations, **urban Indian organizations**, or health service providers to tribes. Out of the \$11 billion, **not less than \$750 million** will be allocated in coordination with the Director of the Indian Health Service to tribes, tribal organizations, **urban Indian organizations**, or health service providers to tribes. These funds are to be used for: “necessary expenses to develop, purchase, administer, process, and analyze **COVID-19 tests**, including **support for workforce, epidemiology**, use by employers or in other settings, scale up of testing by public health, academic, commercial, and hospital laboratories, and community-based testing sites, health care facilities, and other entities engaged in COVID-19 testing, conduct surveillance, trace contacts, and other related activities related to COVID-19 testing.”

The deal will total \$484 billion, including \$310 billion to replenish the funding for the [Paycheck Protection Program](#). This bill also expands the scope of the Paycheck Protection Act allowing for small banks, credit unions, and **non-profits** to be eligible for the funds. Of this \$310 billion, **\$75 billion** is intended for **eligible health care providers**. Eligible health care providers include “public entities, Medicaid or Medicare enrolled suppliers and providers, and for-profit and **not-for-profit entities**” that “provide diagnoses, testing, or care for individuals with possible cases of COVID-19.”

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The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is the national non-profit organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally-competent health and public health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) living in urban areas. NCUIH is the only national representative of the 41 Title V Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) under the Indian Health Service (IHS) in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA). NCUIH strives

to improve the health of the over 70% of the AI/AN population that lives in urban areas, supported by quality, accessible health care centers.