Press Release: NCUIH Honors Senator Tom Udall with Lifetime Champion Award

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This award is presented to a Member of Congress who advocates for quality health care legislation for American Indians and Alaska Natives in urban areas.

Washington, D.C. (November 12, 2020) – The National Council of Urban Indian Health is pleased to award Senator Tom Udall with the first Urban Indian Health Congressional Lifetime Champion Award.

"We are proud to award Senator Tom Udall of New Mexico with the first Urban Indian Health Congressional Lifetime Champion Award," said Francys Crevier (Algonquin), NCUIH CEO. "Senator Udall's commitment and tireless efforts championing for quality health care legislation has and will create a lasting difference in the health outcomes of American Indians and Alaska Natives who live in urban areas."

The Urban Indian Health Congressional Lifetime Champion is awarded to a Member of Congress who has made a lasting impact through championing health legislation to benefit urban American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN).

"The federal government's trust and treaty responsibilities to Native Americans do not stop at reservation boundaries," said Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM). "Nearly 70 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives live in urban areas and Congress must ensure they have access to quality health care — especially during this public health crisis. It has been an honor to work with the National Council of Urban Indian Health to ensure better access to health care for Native Americans no matter where they live. We must continue the work to build a stronger, better Indian Health Service system for generations to come."

Throughout his career, Sen. Tom Udall, Vice-Chairman of Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, has prioritized the trust and treaty responsibility to Indian Country, including urban Indians. Because of his leadership, the health outcomes for urban Indians have considerably improved through the expansion of services at Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs). Earlier this year, Sen. Udall introduced a bipartisan bill to expand health care resources for UIOs amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This is just one example of how Sen. Udall springs into action to ensure tribal members living in urban areas are not left behind.

"We truly are grateful for Senator Udall," Crevier said. "Not only has he made tremendous efforts for our UIOs, but he has left a lasting impact on Indian Country as a whole."