

House Passed NCUIH IHS - VA Bill

Category: Policy Blog

written by NCUIH | December 21, 2020

On December 3, the House passed the [Health Care Access for Urban Native Veterans Act \(H.R. 4153\)](#) which would amend the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) to enable the VA to reimburse Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) for services to VA beneficiaries at urban Indian health centers.

This passage comes after advocacy from NCUIH and other national organizations serving American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN). On July 15, 2019, NCAI passed a [resolution](#) calling on the United States Congress to enact legislation requiring the Veterans Affairs Administration to reimburse UIOs for health care provided to AI/AN veterans. Following the resolution, NCUIH testified before Congress on Native Veterans' access to healthcare, asking the Department of Veterans Affairs to "fully implement the VA and Indian Health Services' Memorandum of Understanding (VA-IHS MOU) and Reimbursement Agreement for Direct Health Care Services."

On December 4, the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH), National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), and National Indian Health Board (NIHB) wrote a letter urging Congress to ensure the passage of this bill before the end of the year.

Why does this matter to UIOs?

- Most AI/AN veterans live in urban areas and would benefit from the culturally competent care provided at UIOs. Reimbursement for these services would allow UIOs to adequately serve Native Veterans.