

[NCUIH Submits Testimony to Senate Committee on Indian Affairs](#)

Category: Policy Blog

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NCUIH recently [submitted testimony](#) to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs for the Oversight Hearing “A call to action: Native communities’ priorities in focus for the 117th Congress.” In the testimony, NCUIH outlined how decades of underfunding of the IHS system coupled with the recent COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the urgency of rectifying the long-standing inequities UIOs face. UIOs do not have parity with IHS and Tribal Health Providers in many cost-saving programs. UIOs already operate on thin financial margins and receive funding from a single line item, which is less than 1% of the total IHS budget.

This chronic underfunding is exacerbated by UIOs inability to participate in essential cost-saving measures. NCUIH has worked closely with Representative Raul Ruiz (D-CA) and key Congressional leaders to push for the inclusion of 100% FMAP for services provided at UIOs. Last week, Representative Ruiz introduced H.R.1373 the Urban Indian Health Parity Act, bipartisan legislation, with 12 original cosponsors to extend the 100% FMAP provision permanently to expand resources for American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban areas especially as COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage Native communities.

Why Does this Matter to UIOs?:

There is a pressing need for the health care services provided by UIOs. Urban AI/ANs experience disproportionate rates of chronic diseases and are therefore more likely to need access to health care. Urban AI/ANs are 3 times more likely to have diabetes, more than 1.5 times more likely to have been hospitalized for respiratory infections in the past, and more than 1.5 times more likely to have coronary heart disease than non-Hispanic whites.

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