

Policy Alert: COVID-19 and Omnibus Include Huge Wins for Urban Indians

Category: Policy Blog

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The bills include a \$5 million increase for urban Indian health.

Today, Congress released the “[Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#)” (H.R. 133) consisting of a \$900 billion COVID-19 pandemic relief bill and a \$1.4 trillion omnibus spending bill. The package includes funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 and provides COVID-19 vaccine funding along with other pandemic relief measures. The package includes [\\$6.236 billion](#) for Indian Health Service (IHS) in FY21 and extends the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) until 2023.

In summary, the package includes the following National Council for Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) priorities for Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs):

- **\$62.7 million for Urban Indian Health in FY21, a \$5 million increase from FY20**
- **\$1 million to conduct an infrastructure study for facilities run by UIOs**
- **Reimbursement from VA to UIOs for urban Native veterans’ health (H.R. 4153/S. 2365)**
- **FTCA Coverage for UIOs (H.R. 6535/S. 3650)— *This bill passed the Senate yesterday and is currently headed to the President’s desk for signature.***

The package provides the following for IHS, Tribal organizations and UIOs:

- Extends SDPI through 2023 at current levels
- \$210 million from CDC to IHS to plan, prepare for, promote, distribute, administer, monitor, and track coronavirus vaccines to ensure broad-based distribution access and vaccine coverage
- \$790 million from CDC to IHS for necessary expenses for testing, contact tracing, surveillance, containment, and mitigation
- \$125 million set aside for ITU in funding for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- \$15 million to make payments under the National Health Service Corps loan repayment program
- Obesity prevention and reduction programs in consultation with Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations
- Establish “Sec. 330n. Expanding Capacity for Health Outcomes” in Title 3 of the Public Health Service Act to include Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations

Next Steps

- Congress plans to vote tonight on the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.
- NCUIH will conduct further in-depth analysis which will be forthcoming.