

NCUIH Endorses Bipartisan, Bicameral Bill to Improve Public Health Emergency Preparedness for Indian Health Care Providers

Category: Policy Blog

written by Jeremy Grabiner | April 29, 2022

On March 31, 2022, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Representative Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), and Representative Tom Cole (R-Okla.) [introduced](#) the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act (S. 3968)*. The bill would allow Tribes to apply directly to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program funds. Currently, only states and certain local entities may apply for PHEP funds to respond to public health emergencies. The bill authorizes \$750 million for each of fiscal years 2023 through 2025 for the PHEP program 5% tribal set-aside of the total CDC PHEP funds. Additionally, urban Indian organizations (UIOs) are included in several important consultation provisions in the bill that would ensure they are included in crafting public health plans.

“The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is pleased to endorse Rep. Gallego’s CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act which provides Tribes access to Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) program funds and includes urban Indian organization input on the development of public health plans. The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on Native communities, and this bill’s equitable access to critical preparedness funds will ensure Indian Country will be better prepared to respond to future public health emergencies.” – **Francys Crevier (Algonquin)**, CEO, NCUIH.

The CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act is cosponsored by Senators Tina Smith (D-Minn.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.), and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.). The bill has been endorsed by leading Native American advocacy groups— including the National Congress of American Indians, National Indian Health Board, and NCUIH. It currently awaits consideration.

This bill has been added to the NCUIH legislative tracker and can be found [here](#).

Background

Inequities in access to public health resources has caused the COVID-19 pandemic to have a disproportionate impact on Indian Country. The CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act helps address this issue by:

- Allowing to apply directly to the CDC PHEP program;
- Requiring the CDC to fund at least ten tribes for emergency preparedness and include a
- Exempting tribes needing to match funds and waive many of the reporting requirements to minimize the administrative burden on tribal nations; and
- Requiring grant recipients to include tribes, tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations in their consultation process in their development of public health plans.

[Senate Text of Bill](#)

[Senator Warren's Press Release](#)