Urban Indian Health Policy Updates: ICWA, Veterans Day, Advance Appropriations

Category: Policy Blog
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1 Big Thing: NCUIH President Sonya Tetnowski to Walk in Native Veterans Procession Tomorrow



Tomorrow: NCUIH President and CEO of Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley Sonya Tetnowski (Makah) is a Native Veteran who served as a U.S. Army Paratrooper. Tomorrow, Ms. Tetnowski will join the Native Veterans Procession and Dedication Ceremony of the National Native American Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.

What's next: Watch Live on Veterans Day 2pm EST

Why it matters: NCUIH estimates 67% of American Indian and Alaska Native veterans live in urban areas.

Go deeper: Ms. Tetnowski serves on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Advisory Committee on Tribal and Indian Affairs Committee created by Congress in 2020. The Committee met this week in Washington, DC.

- NCUIH played a critical role in getting this legislation passed in 2020 and in nominating an urban Indian Organization (UIO) representative to the Committee, which advises the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on issues impacting Native veterans.



The VA-TAC meeting in Washington, DC this week with Clay Ward, Program Analyst, Office of Tribal Government Relations at the Department of Veterans Affairs, NCUIH President and CEO of Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley Sonya Tetnowski, Stephanie Birdwell, Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Office of Tribal Government Relations

2. NCUIH Stands Up for ICWA at Supreme Court



NCUIH Director of Congressional Relations Lycia Maddocks (Ft. Yuma Quechan) and Chief Executive Officer Francys Crevier, JD (Algonquin) stood up for ICWA.

Yesterday, the U.S. Supreme Court heard an argument in *Haaland v. Brackeen* (21-376) and the consolidated cases. NCUIH hosted a listening event for supporters of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and went to the Supreme Court to join advocates to show solidarity. Earlier this year, NCUIH signed on to an amicus brief in support of ICWA.

> "There are healthcare promises to individual Native Americans who live in urban areas."
> – Chief Justice Neil Gorsuch



NCUIH hosted a breakfast and lunch for allies and supporters to hear the arguments.

Go deeper: Materials for this case, including oral argument audio and transcripts, are available here.

Listen: NCUIH Public Policy Counsel Rori Collins JD, Esq. (Nenana Native Village (Tanana Athabascan)) share why this case is so important: The Indian Child Welfare Act: What it is; Why it's under scrutiny

Learn more: ICWA's Constitutionality Challenged and Review by the Supreme Court Underway

3. NCUIH Representing Urban Indian Health in DC This Week



Marvin B. Figueroa. Director of the Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs (IEA) at the Department of Health and Humans Services, Roselyn Tso, Director of the Indian Health Service, Francys Crevier, CEO of NCUIH, and Stacy Bohlen CEO of NIHB in a panel on Resilience, Strength, And Innovation Across Indian Country.

It was a busy, successful week in Washington, DC.

- On Monday, NCUIH attended the IHS Self-Governance meeting.
- On Tuesday and Wednesday, NCUIH attended the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee where we had time to discuss issues of importance to urban Indian health.
- On Wednesday, NCUIH hosted an event for supporters of ICWA to listen to the oral arguments.
- Today, Secretary Becerra invited NCUIH CEO Francys Crevier to participate in a panel in celebration of Native American Heritage Month with Director Tso.



CEO Francys Crevier and Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Xavier Becerra spent time together at the Native American Month Celebration at HHS.



CEO Francys Crevier and Director Tso also caught up during the HHS Secretrary’s Tribal Advisory Committee meeting this week.

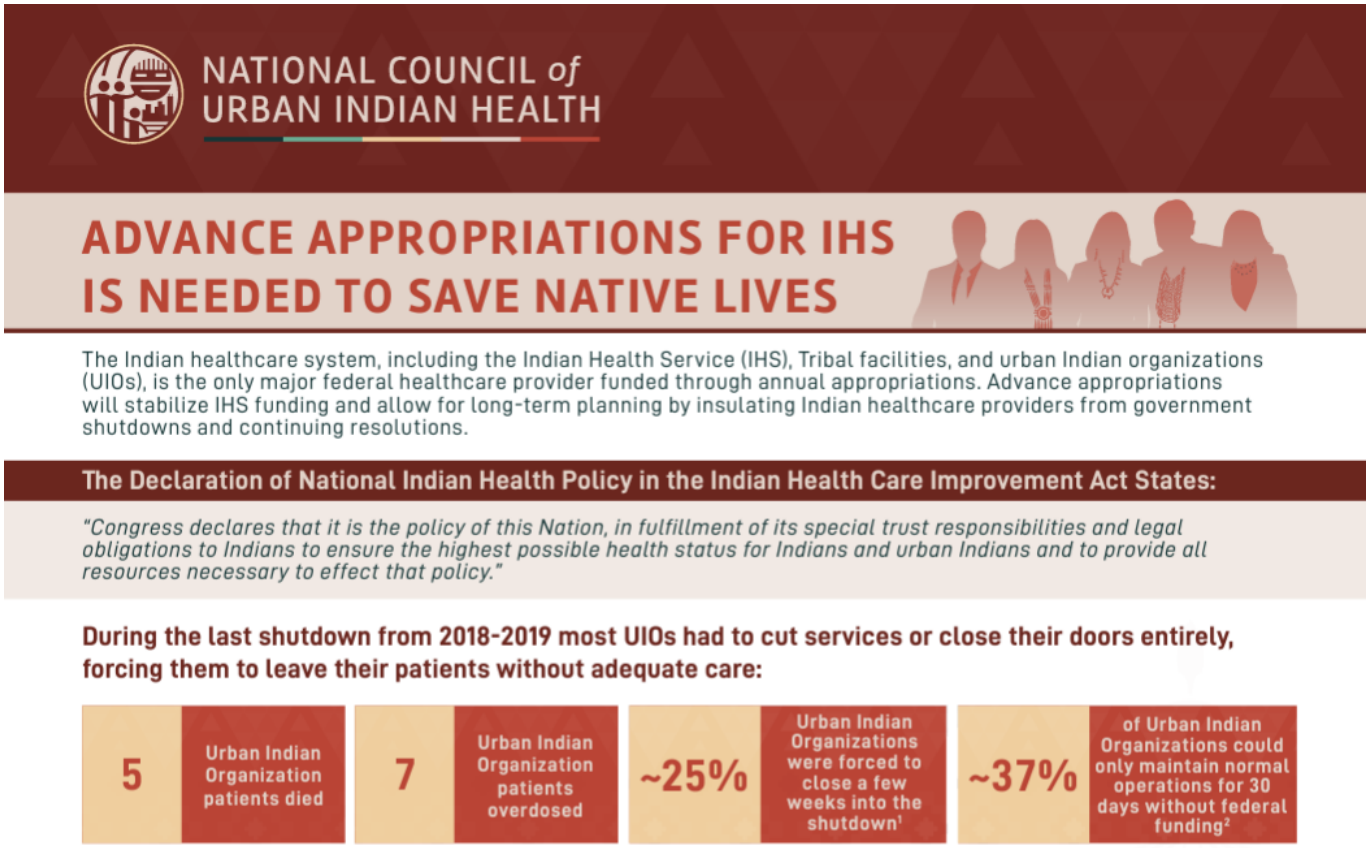


NCUIH staff standing in support of ICWA.



Public Policy Counsel Rori Collins, Vice President of Public Policy Meredith Raimondi, Public Policy Manager Mary Jomia and Policy Analyst Jennifer Wendling attended the Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee meeting this week.

4. Join efforts on Advance Appropriations



As you know, NCUIH is hard at work to secure Advance Appropriations for the Indian Health Service. There are several actions to take to support these efforts that are compiled below.

Specifically, in addition to the Omnibus letters we circulated this week, we would encourage all UIOs to join additional advocacy efforts including the social media campaign and to sign on to National Indian Health Board (NIHB) letters. NIHB has invited Urban Indian Organizations who support these efforts to join a letter to Congress and the White House on Advance Appropriations for IHS.

1. Send the Congressional FY23 Omnibus letters provided by NCUIH (Please contact Policy@NCUIH.org) if you did not receive these letters.
2. Join the Social Media Campaign! #AdvanceIndianHealth (Download the Toolkit)
3. Sign-on to the National Indian Health Board Congressional and White House Letters (View Letters and Sign-On | Deadline: Monday, 11/14)
4. Share the One Pager on IHS Advance Appropriations with partners (View One Pager)
5. Share the Action Alert and encourage people to Contact Congress (View Action Alert and Contact Congress)
6. Share the Template Letter and Talking Points with Partner Organizations (View Template Letter and Talking Points)
7. Learn more about these issues at NCUIH's Advance Appropriations for IHS web project. (Website, Background Document on Advance Appropriations for IHS, Interactive Timeline of Advance Appropriations for IHS, History of Legislation)

Thank you for all your hard work and advocacy!

- Check out our calendar of events this month here.
- We are also hosting an NCUIH Virtual Dialogue on Understanding and Preventing MMIP on 11/30 at 1-2:30 pm ET (Join Zoom Meeting)