

NCUIH Submits Comments to IHS Regarding the Office of Urban Indian Health Programs Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan

Category: Policy Blog

written by Colin Tompson | January 20, 2023

On December 15, 2022, the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) submitted comments to the Indian Health Service (IHS) regarding additional input and recommendations for revisions to the third draft of the IHS Office of Urban Indian Health Programs (OUIHP) Strategic Plan and the Implementation Plan. The Strategic Plan and the Implementation Plan will be significant in guiding the provision of high-quality and culturally competent health care in fulfillment of the United States' trust obligation to American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) people. These comments were submitted in response to a November 17, 2022 [Dear Urban Leader letter](#) seeking input and recommendations for the final draft of the 2023-2027 IHS OUIHP Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan.

Background

In 2017, IHS developed an OUIHP Strategic Plan 2017-2021, pursuant to the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which described what the Agency hoped to achieve over the next 5 years. IHS is currently finalizing a new OUIHP Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 based on evaluations of the prior Strategic Plan along with participation and feedback received from urban Indian organization (UIO) leaders, IHS staff, and other stakeholders. According to the OUIHP, the new Plan will include goals, objectives, strategies, and performance measures, based on input from UIO Leaders, partners, and external stakeholders.

NCUIH's Role

NCUIH has submitted three separate comments and recommendations to IHS regarding the Plan. These comments were based on NCUIH's consultations with UIOs, the IHS Urban Confer held on December 15, 2022, and NCUIH's subject matter expertise. NCUIH reiterated that input from UIOs is vital for IHS and its operating divisions to effectively gather comprehensive feedback, share critical information, and build mutual trust.

Recommendations

As OUIHP works to finalize the Strategic Plan for 2023-2027, NCUIH made numerous recommendations to strengthen the OUIHP strategic plan. Among these recommendations were keeping strategic pillars from the prior draft regarding facilitating communication with federal partners on UIO issues and to provide technical assistance to UIOs transitioning from an outreach and referral program to an ambulatory clinic. Further, NCUIH recommended revisions on a strategic pillar to retain strategies regarding receiving 100% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for UIOs.

NCUIH thanks the OUIHP for the hard work in developing this comprehensive third draft and for conferring with UIOs on additional recommendations. NCUIH also appreciates the opportunity to provide additional comments and recommendations on the OUIHP Strategic Plan Draft 3. NCUIH strongly believes that the Strategic Plan and the Implementation Plan are important vehicles to

articulate leadership priorities, provide direction for program management functions, engage external partners and entities, and measure OUIHP's progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of IHS. NCUIH looks forward to the final version of the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and to working with OUIHP to ensure both the Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan are successful.