October Policy Updates: Events, Legislative & Federal Updates, and Funding Opps

Category: Policy Blog
written by NCUIH | October 25, 2023

October is almost over! Thank you for attending our focus groups this past month and informing us of important issues.

From October 3-5, NCUIH held UIO Focus Groups with UIOs in order to set our policy priorities for 2024. **Access our survey to provide additional input here.**

Responses from focus group attendees and non-attendees are both valuable. Your responses to this survey will directly impact the quality of advocacy and support that NCUIH can provide.

Legislative Updates: Continuing Resolution, SDPI, & Indigenous Peoples Day

Continuing Resolution (CR): On Sept. 30, President Biden signed a temporary bill that will keep the federal government funded until November 17, narrowly averting a shutdown.

- **IHS to Maintain Continuity of Operations with Advance Appropriations**

  Did you know?: Due to Indian Country's success of securing advance appropriations for IHS, funding will be maintained for almost all IHS programs in the event of a shutdown.

  Go deeper: Read IHS Director Roselyn Tso's October 1 Dear Tribal Leader and Urban Indian Organization Leader letter sharing information regarding the current status of fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations for IHS in response to the recently enacted CR.

Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI): Extended through Nov. 17. The CR also included $19.7 million in funding for the CR time period. NCUIH is monitoring several bills that contain a reauthorization for SDPI:

- *Special Diabetes Program Reauthorization Act of 2023* (H.R. 3561/S. 1855): Would reauthorize the SDPI program at $170 million per year for two years.

- *Lower Costs, More Transparency Act* (H.R. 5378): Large health care package that includes reauthorization of SDPI.

S.3022 – IHS Workforce Parity Act of 2023: NCUIH has endorsed this legislation that would allow healthcare providers working part-time to access IHS scholarship and loan repayment programs. Providers working at UIOs will be eligible for proposed changes.

- **Next Steps:** NCUIH is working with the sponsors (Senator Cortez Masto and Senator Mullin) of this legislation to help ensure its passage through the Senate.

S.2970/H.R. 5822 – Indigenous Peoples' Day Act: NCUIH has endorsed this legislation to replace the official holiday recognized on the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

- **Next Steps:** NCUIH is working with the sponsors (Senator Martin Heinrich and Rep. Norma Torres) of this legislation to help ensure its passage through the chambers.

NCUIH Requests Full IHS Funding for FY 2025, Increased Access to Food Distribution Programs for Urban Indians, & Access to Behavioral Health Resources

On September 29, NCUIH submitted comments to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regarding the formulation of the President's FY 2025 Budget.

- **The bottom line:** NCUIH expressed its support for the Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup's request for full mandatory funding for the IHS at $53.85 billion and the Urban Indian Health Line Item at $965.3 million in the President's FY2025 Budget. NCUIH also recommended that the President's Budget propose setting the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) at 100% for Medicaid services provided at UIOs, request $80 million for the Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Resources for Native Americans Program, and propose permanent reauthorization of the SDPI at $250 million if not reauthorized in the FY 2024 budget.

On October 13, NCUIH submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in response to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Proposed Rule Improving Access and Parity in Food Distribution Programs.

- **The bottom line:** NCUIH requested that the agency honor the request of Tribal Leaders and remove certain urban place restrictions in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) regulations.

On October 19, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) hosted a virtual listening session with UIOs to discuss the Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Resources for Native Americans (Section 1201 Program). This is a new program, authorized but not appropriated, under the 2023 Omnibus Funding bill.

- **Why it matters:** This meeting provided the opportunity for SAMHSA to engage with UIOs regarding development of the program, including the funding formula and reporting requirements.

Upcoming Events and Important Dates: SDPI Funding Opportunity, Urban Confer on Health IT Modernization

Upcoming Opportunities:

2024 Special Diabetes Program for Indians 2.0 (SDPI-2) – IHS

The IHS Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention announced a new 2024 funding opportunity for all federally recognized Tribes, Tribal organizations, UIOs, and/or federal health care facilities that currently do not have a 2023 SDPI grant.

The 2024 SDPI-2 will be a 4-year program to address diabetes treatment and prevention efforts in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. Applications are due by November 29, and additional application information is available on the IHS website.

Estimated Total Program Funding: $10,000,000
Expected # of Awards: 15
Award Range: $25,000 – $600,000

Upcoming Comments and Submissions:

- **October 31**: Comment deadline to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) – Healthy People 2030 Leading Health Indicators Initiative

Upcoming Events:

- **October 25:** White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health Monthly Update. Register here.
- **November 8:** Tribal Consultation/Urban Confer: Health Information Technology Modernization – The Path Forward. Register here.
- **November 12-17:** National Congress of American Indians 2023 Annual Conference. Register here.
- **November 16:** Urban Program Executive Directors/Chief Executive Officers Monthly Conference Call
- **December 20:** Next NCUIH Monthly Policy Workgroup meeting. NOTE: The November meeting is canceled.

NCUIH in Action



NCUIH VP of Policy and Communications Meredith Raimondi, with Deputy Administrator and Director of Center for Medicaid and CHIP services at CMS Dan Tsai.

On October 18-19, Meredith Raimondi, VP of Policy and Communications, and Chandos Culleen, Director of Federal Relations, attended the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) Face-to-Face meeting in Washington DC as technical advisors.



NCUIH CEO Francys Crevier (Algonquin) speaking at the National Urban Indian Family Coalition conference.

On October 19, NCUIH CEO Francys Crevier (Algonquin) presented at the National Urban Indian Family Coalition about our partnership on the Democracy is Indigenous Integrated Voter Engagement project. She highlighted the important work that NCUIH and UIOs are doing around voter registration and Native youth civic engagement.

Learn more and find resources here.

Thank you for all your hard work and advocacy!