

PRESS RELEASE: NCUIH Honors Councilman Andy Joseph Jr., Carmelita Skeeter, Martin Waukazoo, Sonya Tetnowski, Ralyn Montoya, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation

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NCUIH recognized seven leaders and health advocates for their work in advancing the health of Native people.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 1, 2024) – The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) presented seven awards to leaders and advocate organizations for their efforts to advance urban Indian health during its 2024 Annual Conference: Sustaining Traditions: Culture, Identity, Health. NCUIH thanks the awardees for their dedication to upholding the federal trust and treaty obligation to provide the highest level of health to all American Indian and Alaska Native people, regardless of where they reside.

Tribal Leader Impact Award - Councilman Andy Joseph Jr. (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation)

The Tribal Leader Impact Award was presented to Councilman Andy Joseph, Jr. (Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation), Veterans Chair and District Representative of the Colville Business Council, who has demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and impact in addressing health disparities and improving the well-being of Native populations, and has a proven track record of advocating for policies, programs, or initiatives that have positively influenced health outcomes, cultural preservation, and community resilience within their tribal communities and beyond.

Urban Indian Organization Visionary Award - Carmelita Skeeter (Citizen Nation Potawatomi)

The Urban Indian Organization Visionary Award was awarded to Carmelita Skeeter (Citizen Nation Potawatomi), CEO of the Indian Health Care Resource Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who has demonstrated visionary leadership and innovation in addressing challenges and opportunities within urban Native communities and has a track record of developing and implementing innovative programs, initiatives, or strategies that have significantly contributed to the advancement of urban Indian health and well-being.



Pictured: NCUIH Board Member Natalie Aguilera, NCUIH CEO Francys Crevier, NCUIH President-Elect Robyn Sunday-Allen, Carmelita Skeeter, CEO of the Indian Health Care Resource Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, NCUIH President Walter Murillo, NCUIH Outgoing President Sonya Tetnowski

Distinguished Service Award - Sonya Tetnowski (Makah Tribe)

The Distinguished Service Award was given to Sonya Tetnowski (Makah Tribe) as a heartfelt tribute to our esteemed Board President, in recognition of her profound dedication and unwavering commitment to NCUIH and, by extension, to Native American communities across the nation. Sonya's tenure has been marked by an extraordinary blend of passion, vision, and tireless advocacy, which have propelled NCUIH to new heights of impact and relevance. Through her leadership, Sonya has been a beacon of hope and empowerment for Native peoples, championing initiatives that uplift health equity, cultural preservation, and community resilience. Her legacy is woven into the fabric of our organization and echoes in the lives she has touched and transformed. This award celebrates Sonya Tetnowski's profound impact, embodying the spirit of service, compassion, and solidarity that defines her remarkable leadership journey.



Pictured: NCUIH Outgoing President Sonya Tetnowski with NCUIH CEO, Francys Crevier and NCUIH Board President Walter Murillo

Urban Indian Legacy Award - Martin Waukazoo (Lakota)

The Urban Indian Legacy Award was presented to Martin Waukazoo (Lakota), Former CEO of the Native American Health Center, who has made enduring and significant contributions to the urban Indian health movement over the years, dedicating their careers to advocating for urban Native health, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering community empowerment.



Pictured: NCUIH Board Member, Natalie Aguilera, and Native American Health Center accepting on behalf of Martin Waukazoo

Urban Indian Organization Staff Member of the Year Award - Ralyn Montoya (Diné)

The UIO Staff Member of the Year Award was given to Ralyn Montoya (Diné), Public Relations & Marketing Specialist at the Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake, who has demonstrated exceptional dedication, leadership, and service in advancing her organization's mission and goals.



Pictured: NCUIH Board President Walter Murillo with Public Relations & Marketing Specialist at the Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake, Ralyn Montoya

Native Health Rising Ally Award - The Pew Charitable Trusts

The Native Health Rising Ally Award was presented to The Pew Charitable Trusts, a vital partner in NCUIH's efforts to improve the health and well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native people who has shown exceptional dedication and effectiveness in partnering with urban Native communities to improve health care outcomes. NCUIH is grateful to The Pew Charitable Trusts' demonstrated commitment to culturally competent healthcare delivery, collaboration with urban health organizations, and innovative approaches to addressing health disparities.



Pictured: NCUIH VP of Policy and Communications, Meredith Raimondi, with Alaina McBournie, Pew Senior Manager, Substance Use Prevention and Treatment Initiative, and Chris Lipson, Manager, Pew, Strategy and Compliance

Native Health Partnership Excellence Award - W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The Native Health Partnership Excellence Award was presented to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, an organization that has demonstrated outstanding support, advocacy, and allyship in advancing urban Native American health initiatives. NCUIH is appreciative of W.K. Kellogg Foundation's active engagement in promoting health equity, amplifying indigenous voices, fostering culturally sensitive healthcare practices, and fostering partnerships with Urban Indian Organizations.



Pictured: NCUIH VP of Policy and Communications, Meredith Raimondi, with Caroline Brunton, W.K. Kellogg Foundation Program Officer

About NCUIH

The National Council of Urban Indian Health is a national non-profit organization devoted to the support and development of quality, accessible, and culturally competent health and public health services for American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban areas. NCUIH is a national organization advocating for the 41 Title V Urban Indian Organizations under the Indian Health Service in the *Indian Health Care Improvement Act*.

NCUIH respects and supports Tribal sovereignty and the unique government-to-government relationship between our Tribal Nations and the United States. NCUIH works to support those federal laws, policies, and procedures that respect and uplift Tribal sovereignty and the government-to-government relationship. NCUIH does not support any federal law, policy, or procedure that infringes upon or in any way diminishes Tribal sovereignty or the government-to-government relationship.

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