

Congressional Roundup: Continuing Resolution Passed Extending Key Public Health Programs Including the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, Congress Passes Key Bills Impacting Native Veterans and Children

Category: Policy Blog

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Continuing Resolution Signed into Law, Averting a Government Shutdown

The House and Senate passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to extend government funding set to expire on December 20, 2024, until March 14, 2025, which was signed into law by President Biden on December 21. The CR includes \$100 billion for disaster relief in the wake of recent national disasters, a one-year extension of the Farm Bill to support agriculture, and extends all expiring health programs until March 31, 2025. The CR extends the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI), Medicare Telehealth Flexibilities, Community Health Center Funding, and the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) funding. A more detailed analysis of the Continuing Resolution is below.

Next Steps:

Congress will continue to negotiate a permanent spending bill for FY 2025 and NCUIH will monitor for updates.

Key Health Extender Provisions Included:

Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI)

- SDPI is a highly effective program that funds life-saving efforts to fight diabetes and improve long-term health outcomes. SDPI has provided grants to 31 Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) that enables them to provide necessary services to reduce the incidence of diabetes-related illness among urban Native communities.
- The CR extends current funding for SDPI through March 31, 2025, at \$39.3 million. The program was set to expire on December 31, 2024.
- NCUIH engaged in extensive [advocacy](#) to increase signees on the SDPI Dear Colleague letters in the [House](#) and [Senate](#), as well as repeatedly fighting for increased funding for the program.

Extension of Telehealth Flexibilities

- The CR provides a 3-month extension through March 31, 2025, on Medicare telehealth flexibilities, including removing geographic requirements and expanding originating sites for telehealth services, expanding practitioners eligible to furnish telehealth services, and

temporarily delaying in-person requirements for mental health services at Federally Qualified Health Centers.

- This provision allows federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), rural health clinics, and Medicare to pay for mental health telehealth services, without any in-person requirements. Without continuation of this provision, physicians would be required to provide an in-person service within the six months prior to beginning telehealth services.

Extension of Community Health Center Funding

- Funding for Community Health Centers is extended through March 31, 2025, providing \$1,050,410,959 during this time period. Community Health Centers were funded at \$4 billion per year from 2019 to 2023.
- Currently, there are [10 UIOs](#) that are dually funded from both the Health Center Program and the Indian Health Service.

Extension of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) Funding

- The CR extends the NHSC funding at \$85,068,493 million through March 31, 2025.

Congress Passes Key Bills Relevant to UIOs:

Congress also passed two bills impacting UIOs at the end of the legislative session. The *Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2024* (S.141) and the *Native American Child Protection Act* (H.R. 663) have both been sent to the President and are expected to become law.

S.141 - Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2024

- On December 16, 2024, the *Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act of 2024* passed the House and Senate.
- The bill is a comprehensive package of bills that significantly expands and reforms the delivery of services at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for veterans, service members, and their families.
- This legislation directs the VA to collaborate with the Director of IHS and representatives from Tribal health programs and UIOs to ensure the availability of home-and community-based services for Native American veterans, including Native American veterans receiving health care and medical services under multiple health care systems.
- Read the bill text [here](#).

H.R. 663 - Native American Child Protection Act

- On December 17, 2024, the *Native American Child Protection Act* has passed the House and Senate.
- This bill reauthorizes and revises programs to investigate and prosecute child abuse, child neglect, and family violence involving Native American children.
- The bill makes **UIOs eligible** for the Indian Child Abuse Treatment Grant Program, creates a National Indian Child Resource and Family Services Center (the Center) that will provide technical assistance and training to Tribes, Tribal organizations, **and UIOs**, and allows **UIO representatives** with expertise in child abuse and child neglect to sit on a 12-member Advisory Board to advise and assist the Center.
- Read the bill text [here](#).
- [Read NCUIH's blog on H.R. 633 passage](#)

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