

# **STATEMENT: NCUIH Responds to HHS Advisory Opinion: Safeguarding Native Healthcare Amid Policy Shifts**

Category: Policy Blog, Press Release, Statement  
written by NCUIH | February 26, 2025

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 26, 2025)** – The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) welcomes the Advisory Opinion issued by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of General Counsel on February 25, 2025. This opinion reaffirms that recent Executive Orders do not alter the federal government’s trust responsibility to provide healthcare for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people. This opinion clarifies that recent Executive Orders do not alter the federal government’s distinct legal obligations to Indian Tribes and their citizens, as established by treaties, statutes, and the U.S. Constitution. It also notes that certain policies at Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities must comply with these Executive Orders.

This action reflects responsiveness to calls from Tribal leaders and Native organizations [urging the administration to uphold its trust obligations](#). NCUIH has consistently advocated for the protection of the Indian health system, including Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs), which provide health services for AI/AN people.

### **Francys Crevier (Algonquin), CEO of NCUIH, stated:**

*“We appreciate the Administration’s affirmation of the federal trust responsibility to provide healthcare for American Indian and Alaska Native people. Native-led Urban Indian Organizations play a critical role in delivering essential services to Native populations, and any policy changes must prioritize the health and well-being of our people.”*

NCUIH calls on policymakers to continue listening to Tribal voices and Native organizations and uphold the federal trust responsibility without compromise. NCUIH remains steadfast in advocating for health care access for all Native communities.

### **Recent news:**

**[PRESS RELEASE: Tribal Organizations Urge Administration to Respect Tribal Sovereignty and Uphold Trust and Treaty Obligations Amid Executive Actions](#)** (Feb. 3, 2025)

**[NCUIH Joins NIHB, NCAI and Self-Governance Communication and Education Tribal Consortium in Requesting the Indian Health System be Exempt from Federal Hiring Freezes](#)** (Feb 4, 2025)

**[IHS Employee Layoffs Halted After Urgent Advocacy Efforts](#)** (Feb. 19, 2025)

**[NCUIH Joins NIHB in Letter to Congressional Leadership Advocating for Protecting the Indian Health System from Funding Freezes](#)** (Feb. 25, 2025)

## **About NCUIH**

The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) is a national representative for the 41 Urban Indian Organizations contracting with the Indian Health Service under the *Indian Health Care Improvement Act*. NCUIH is devoted to the support and development of high quality and accessible health and public health services for American Indian and Alaska Native people living in urban areas.

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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