NCUIH Urges HHS to Reconsider Proposed Budget Cuts to Indian Health Service and HHS

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written by Meredith Raimondi | April 18, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. (April 18, 2025)– The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) sent a letter to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), expressing deep concern over the proposed budget cuts to the Indian Health Service (IHS) and HHS as outlined in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Fiscal Year 2026 Discretionary Budget Passback. **The proposed reductions include nearly $900 million in cuts to the IHS budget and the elimination of IHS advance appropriations, which are crucial for protecting IHS funding from interruptions such as government shutdowns.**The proposed changes would have detrimental effects on the health care delivery for American Indian and Alaska Native people across the United States including for Urban Indian Organizations and Tribal programs. A recent report showed that 50% of Urban Indian Organizations could be forced to discontinue services within six months of funding disruptions.

> "The proposed budget cuts are a direct threat to the health and well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native communities. We call on Secretary Kennedy to honor his commitment to prioritizing Indian Country and appeal these proposed reductions. Lives are at stake and this could have catastrophic consequences," said NCUIH CEO Francys Crevier, JD (Algonquin).

Impact of HHS Cuts on American Indian and Alaska Native Communities

In addition to the specific cuts to the IHS, NCUIH is concerned about the broader reductions in funding to several HHS programs impacting Native health. UIOs and tribal health facilities rely on HHS grants (e.g., SAMHSA, HRSA, CDC, and HIV/AIDS initiatives) to address disparities. For example, Tribal Behavioral Health Grants (Native Connections) are eliminated in the proposal. Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations receiving Native Connections funding will lose funding that addresses suicide, substance use, and trauma impacting American Indian and Alaska Native youth.

Secretary's Commitment to Indian Country

NCUIH appreciates Secretary Kennedy's recent visit to Native Health, an Urban Indian Organization located in Arizona that contracts with the Indian Health Service to provide critical services to Native people. Following this visit, Secretary Kennedy praised Native Health as a model of care that should be replicated and become the standard across Indian Country. He also expressed his commitment to prioritizing Indian Country in his efforts to improve health outcomes.

Call to Action

NCUIH urges Secretary Kennedy to appeal the proposed budget cuts and uphold the federal government's trust obligations to American Indian and Alaska Native people. NCUIH remains committed to working alongside HHS and the current administration to ensure that the IHS and other critical programs receive the necessary funding to effectively serve American Indian and Alaska Native communities. We call for immediate action to prevent the devastating impact of the proposed budget cuts and to support the health and well-being of Indian Country.

Related News

- National Indian Health Board Urges HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to Reject Devastating Cuts to Indian Health Service (April 17, 2025)

Resources

- NCUIH Sends Letter to HHS Requesting Exemption for IHS from Workforce Reduction Initiatives, Protection for IHS Funding (April 8, 2025)
- Secretary Kennedy Visits Arizona Urban Indian Organization NATIVE HEALTH (April 8, 2025)
- HHS Announces Reorganization Impacting HRSA and SAMHSA (April 1, 2025)
- NCUIH Joins Indian Country Coalition in Urging the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary to Uphold Tribal Sovereignty and Protect Funding for Native Programs (March 27, 2025)
- STATEMENT: NCUIH Responds to HHS Advisory Opinion: Safeguarding Native Healthcare Amid Policy Shifts (February 26, 2025)
- NCUIH Joins NIHB in Letter to Congressional Leadership Advocating for Protecting the Indian Health System from Funding Freezes (February 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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