

[NCUIH Honors Pfizer, Ishkode Fund, and Urban Indian Health Leaders](#)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 11, 2026) – The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) presented awards to partner organizations and Urban Indian Organization (UIO) leadership and staff for their work to advance urban Native health during our 2026 Annual Conference. NCUIH thanks the awardees for their dedication to urban Native health and their efforts to ensure that all Native people have access to high-quality health care services, no matter where they live.

Native Health Partnership Excellence Award: Presented to Pfizer and Accepted by Melissa Bishop-Murphy



The Native Health Partnership Excellence Award recognizes an individual or organization that has shown exceptional dedication and effectiveness in partnering with urban Native communities to improve health care outcomes. This year's award was presented to Pfizer.

Over the past four years, Pfizer has invested more than \$800,000 in NCUIH's work, demonstrating a sustained and meaningful commitment to improving health outcomes for urban Native people. Pfizer's partnership has helped advance NCUIH's mission to ensure that American Indian and Alaska Native people living in urban areas have access to high quality, culturally grounded care.

Native Health Rising Ally Award: Presented to Ishkode Fund (Accepted by Kate Trujillo, Senior Programs Director)



The Native Health Rising Ally Award honors an emerging leader or organization who has demonstrated outstanding support, advocacy, and allyship in advancing urban Native American health initiatives. This year's award was presented to the Ishkode Fund, accepted by Senior Programs Director Kate Trujillo.

The Ishkode Fund has demonstrated a growing and genuine commitment to health equity and allyship with Urban Indian Organizations. NCUIH is proud to recognize Ishkode's investment in Native communities and looks forward to continuing to build this important partnership in the years ahead.

The Distinguished Service Award: Presented to Walter Murillo (Choctaw), Outgoing NCUIH Board President and CEO of Native Health



The Distinguished Service Award honors exceptional dedication and sustained commitment to NCUIH and to Native communities across the country. It recognizes individuals whose leadership, advocacy, and service have strengthened urban Indian health, advanced meaningful change, and helped elevate the voices and needs of Native people. This year's award was presented to Walter Murillo (Choctaw), outgoing NCUIH Board President and Chief Executive Officer of Native Health in Phoenix, Arizona.

Walter's leadership has embodied the compassion, integrity, and deep sense of responsibility to community that this award was created to honor. His contributions leave a lasting mark on NCUIH's mission and reflect the spirit of service and solidarity that continues to move the organization forward.

Urban Indian Organization Visionary Award: Presented to Liva'ndrea Knoki, Board of Directors President, Native Americans for Community Action



The Urban Indian Organization Visionary Award celebrates an individual within an Urban Indian Organization who has demonstrated visionary leadership and innovation in addressing challenges and opportunities within urban Native communities. This year's award was presented to LivA'ndrea Knoki, Board of Directors President of Native Americans for Community Action (NACA) in Flagstaff, Arizona.

As NACA's first woman Board President, LivA'ndrea has served in this role for seven years, advancing the organization's mission by strengthening governance, expanding strategic partnerships, and centering culturally grounded approaches in urban Indigenous health. She has helped reimagine access to care beyond traditional clinic-based models and has advanced culturally rooted practices — including traditional healing, conscious language, and ceremonial protocol — within urban systems. Her leadership has helped operationally define "Indigenous Values" to support services for youth, elders, LGBTQ2S+ relatives, and unhoused relatives, while reinforcing that Urban Indigenous Health requires models distinct from rural or reservation-based systems.

Urban Indian Organization Staff Member of the Year Award: Presented to Michael Duran, Director of Counseling, Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley



The Urban Indian Organization Staff Member of the Year Award recognizes a staff member of an Indian Health Service-funded Urban Indian Organization who demonstrates exceptional dedication, leadership, and service in advancing the organization’s mission and goals. This year’s award was presented to Michael Duran, Director of Counseling at the Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley.

Michael has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advancing culturally grounded care, ensuring that Traditional Healing is not only recognized but integrated as a vital component of community wellness. His work has moved beyond theory to create tangible, positive outcomes for those he serves, making him an exceptional example of the dedication that drives urban Native health forward.

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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