



**Issue 10-10**  
**June 25, 2010**

### **Deadline Nears for Tribal Response**

On May 12, 2010, Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, MD, MPH and Paul Dioguardi of the Department of Health and Human Services, initiated Tribal consultation regarding the implementation of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act).

The deadline for tribal comments is July 1, 2010. Tribal leaders are encouraged to submit comments to the Indian Health Service soon. To view the Dear Tribal Leader and for information on the Affordable Care Act and the IHCIA, visit [www.nihb.org/legislative.php](http://www.nihb.org/legislative.php) for more information.

### **House Agriculture Committee Holds Hearing on Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations**

On Wednesday, June 23, 2010, the Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry of the House Committee on Agriculture held a hearing on the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR). The

hearing explored what is working well within the program, what can be improved and whether any funding issues need to be addressed.

The Subcommittee heard testimony from Kevin Concannon, Under Secretary for the Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, as well as from Mr. Andy Joseph Jr., Chair of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board and board member of the National Indian Health Board, and Ms. Norma Merriman, Group Leader of the Cherokee Nation Human Services.



NIHB board Member, Andy Joseph Jr., Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, testifies during a hearing on the FDPIR program.

The witnesses discussed some of the improvements that have been made to the program, such as more healthy choices for food, but also challenges. For example, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act



provided additional benefits to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps), but not to FDPIR. This has caused individuals to enroll in SNAP instead.

Witnesses also discussed the impact that nutrition has on the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives and for communities that participate in FDPIR, the importance of access to fresh, healthy food. Mr. Joseph highlighted that 37 percent of students K-8 on the Colville Reservation are pre-diabetic. Investing in nutrition will actually save the government money because of decreased costs in the Indian Health Service.

Chairman Joe Baca (CA) chaired the hearing, and highlighted the hearing was the first ever on the FDPIR, making it an historic event. Ranking Member Jeff Fortenberry (NE) focused on how FDPIR could become a model for other nutrition programs by improving health outcomes, reducing cost and protecting vulnerable individuals.

The FDPIR is part of the “Farm Bill” and will be reauthorized in 2012.

The hearing record will stay open for ten days if Tribal leaders would like to submit testimony for the record. Submit statements to [agriculture@mail.house.gov](mailto:agriculture@mail.house.gov).

### **Office of Management and Budget Directs Federal Government to Reduce Budgets**

Federal agencies have been directed to reduce their budget requests for Fiscal Year 2012 by five percent, according to a recently released memo. The Office of Management and Budget, which oversees budget measures for the White House, has directed

heads of Federal departments to reduce their budget requests by five percent below Fiscal Year 2011 levels.

The Administration is working to address the growing Federal deficit and debt, by freezing non-military discretionary spending.

Importantly, the memo does not recommend an across-the-board cut, but rather focused efforts to eliminate fraud, waste and duplication. The savings from these cuts can then be invested into administration priorities, without increasing the budget request.

The Indian Health Service has received significant increases during the previous two fiscal years. The directive will not definitively affect IHS, as it is part of the HHS budget. HHS could still request an increase for IHS and reduce spending in other areas.

For more information on the Indian Health Service budget, or to view the OMB letter, visit

[http://www.nihb.org/legislative/budget\\_formulation.php](http://www.nihb.org/legislative/budget_formulation.php).

### **National Congress of American Indians Hosts Mid-Year Meeting**

This week, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) held its mid-year conference in Rapid City, South Dakota.

Tribal leaders and Federal and state officials met to discuss a wide range of issues, including the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. The NIHB attended the meeting and staff participated on a panel regarding the IHCA and Affordable Care Act.



Senator Dorgan also convened the second Tribal listening session to learn from Indian Country what issues should be developed into policy priorities as presented in the report titled “Recommendations for Congress from Indian Country.” Staff has begun to draft the final document but will still accept comments if submitted immediately. For a copy of the letter and previous recommendations, visit the NIHB Tribal Resources page [http://www.nihb.org/tribal\\_resources/tribal\\_resources.php](http://www.nihb.org/tribal_resources/tribal_resources.php)

### **White House Releases Tribal Progress Report**

The White House released a progress report on Tribal issues on its website. In a blog posting by Kim Teehee, Senior Advisor for Native American Affairs, the White House released the report and provided updates and progress made by the Administration since it held its historic meeting with Tribal leaders. In November 2009, President Obama convened the first ever Tribal Nations Conference. For more information about the blog post and the report itself, visit: [http://www.nihb.org/tribal\\_resources/tribal\\_resources.php](http://www.nihb.org/tribal_resources/tribal_resources.php)

### **Next Week in Washington**

On Wednesday, June 30, beginning at 9:30 a.m., the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (SCIA) will hold a business meeting followed by an oversight hearing titled “A Way Out of the Diabetes Crisis in Indian Country and Beyond.” Witnesses for the hearing include:

Panel 1: Dr. Judith Fradkin, Director, Division of Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolic Diseases, National Institutes of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at NIH

Panel 2: Mr. Wes Studi, Professional Actor and Native American health advocate; Mr. Gary Hall, Olympian Swimmer; Dr. Melvina McCabe, MD, President Association of American Indian Physicians; and Mr. Caitlin Baker, Muscogee Creek Tribe, Founder of CAITLINB.

Also on Wednesday, June 30, the National Indian Health Board will participate in a briefing for Congressional members and staff titled “A Time for Action: Childhood Obesity and Hunger Disparities Within Minority Populations and Underserved Communities.” NIHB will discuss childhood obesity in Indian Country. The briefing is meant to promote the issue of childhood obesity leading up to National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month in September.

### **Upcoming Events and Consultations**

Several meetings and consultations are occurring in the coming weeks and months.

June 28-29, 2010: The National Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup will meet in San Diego, California. The workgroup will review the Fiscal Year 2012 process and will begin to formulate the process for the Fiscal Year 2013 budget. For more information about the budget process, visit [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org).

July 8-9, 2010: The Indian Health Service is hosting a listening session and best practices discussion on Contract Health Services in Crystal City, Virginia. Also, on this date, the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee will meet in Denver, Colorado.

July 26-28, 2010: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will meet with the



Tribal Consultation Advisory Committee (TCAC) in Havre, Montana.

August 24-26, 2010: The Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee will meet in Billings, Montana for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Direct Services Tribes National Meeting.

For more information on these events, visit [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org) or [www.directservicestribes.org](http://www.directservicestribes.org).

### **Funding Available for Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program**

The Administration for Children and Families announced the availability of funds for the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. A total of \$3 million will be available for Fiscal Year 2010. The funding is available through a competitive grant process and applications are due no later than July 26, 2010. The program was created through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. For more information about the grant program visit:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/open/foa/view/HHS-2010-ACF-OFA-TH-0134>.

### **Save the Date!**

The National Indian Health Board will host the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Consumer Conference in Sioux Falls, SD from September 20-23. The theme for this year's event is "Tribal-State Relations and American Indian/Alaska Native Health Care." For more information including hotel and vendor information, visit:

[http://www.nihb.org/communications/conferences\\_events.php](http://www.nihb.org/communications/conferences_events.php).

### **Open Positions at NIHB**

The National Indian Health Board is currently hiring for various positions.

Interested individuals should visit:

[http://www.nihb.org/about\\_us/career\\_opportunities.php](http://www.nihb.org/about_us/career_opportunities.php) for more information or contact

NIHB Deputy Director, Jessica Burger at 202-507-4070.

