

August 14, 2009



Speak up for INDIAN COUNTRY on Health Care Reform

Congressional members are back in their home states speaking with constituents about health care reform. **NOW** is the time for Indian Country to reach out to Congressional members to inform them what health care reform means to us. It is extremely critical that Congress hears about the support for health care reform and the need for specific provisions to address the unique nature of the Indian health care delivery system.

Health Care Reform Update

In the SENATE: Two Senate Committees are drafting bills: one committee has released and passed its bill while the second committee will release a different bill in September. The Senate bill that has been passed includes provisions addressing the Indian health care system.

In the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES: Three House Committees introduced one Health Care Reform Bill, H.R. 3200 – *America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009*. All three House Committees reviewed, amended and passed the bill but a final version of the House bill is still being worked out. When the House returns to DC in September, the bill will go to the House floor for a vote. However, the House's bill lacks provisions to uphold the Federal trust responsibility to provide health care to Indians and to protect the unique Indian health system from inadvertent harm by national health care reform.

Representative Nick Rahall (D-WV) has led the charge for introduction of an Indian health amendment package to H.R. 3200 to ensure that the necessary protections are in place for the Indian health care system. Representative Pallone has filed a similar amendment package. We need to have these amendments in H.R. 3200! For more information on these amendments, please visit www.nihb.org

What You Can Do:

- Attend a Town Hall Meeting in your area
 - To find a meeting near you, visit <http://www.healthcareforamericanow.org/>
- Schedule a visit with your representative or their staff while they are back in your area
 - To find your Representative's local office, visit <http://www.house.gov/>
 - To find your Senator's local office, visit <http://www.senate.gov/>
- Call your Congressional Representative TODAY
 - **Congressional Switchboard:** 1 (800) 828-0498 or (202) 224-3121

The Message:

- Indian Country supports Health Care Reform.
- The Indian health care system is OUR health care of choice and MUST BE supported by including certain protections to avoid inadvertent harm from health care reform. For example,
 - *Exempting American Indian and Alaska Natives from individual penalties* as Indian people have already paid for their health care by ceding millions of acres of land.
 - *Providing Indian Health providers* with the right to participate in any new health care exchanges and assuring our providers will receive payment from services provided to patients enrolled in an exchange plan.
- To House of Representatives Members: Indian Country supports the Rahall & Pallone amendments, which are necessary to protect the Indian health care system.
 - A draft letter is included to send to Congressional Representatives regarding Rahall and Pallone amendments.

Want more information about health care reform?

Here are other websites with more information on health care reform:

- Health Care for American Now: <http://healthcareforamericanow.org/>
- Families USA: <http://www.familiesusa.org/>

QUESTIONS: Please contact NIHB's Legislative Director, Jennifer Cooper at (202) 680-4455.