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National Indian  
Health Board



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## President Obama Urges Congress to Act on Health Reform

President Obama held a health care summit at the White House on February 25, 2010 to meet with Democratic and Republican Congressional leaders. A week later, President Obama unveiled his health reform proposal and urged Congress to take an up or down vote on health care reform. The President's proposal incorporates ideas presented in the House and Senate bills, and also ideas offered by Republican members. An important note is that the President's proposal includes the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCA). Last year, both the House and Senate bills included versions of the IHCA in their respective versions.

The Congressional Democratic leadership is now formulating a strategy to move forward on health reform. It is understood the next big step is that the House will be likely to vote on the Senate bill HR 3590. The White House is pushing for this vote by March 18. Next, both the House and Senate would seek to pass a second bill through reconciliation to fix portions of the Senate bill that the House Democrats do not agree with.

Reconciliation is a parliamentary process in which Congress can pass a bill that affects budgetary items with a simple majority. The IHCA and numerous Indian specific provisions in the Senate bill are likely to remain in place through this entire process. After the House and Senate have passed both bills, the bills will be sent to the President Obama to be signed into law. For more information on health care reform, including recent legislative alerts, please visit [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org).

## Dorgan Introduces Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization

Senator Byron D. Dorgan, chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs introduced S.3058 to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). The senate bill would provide \$200 million per year for five years to continue SDPI.

Today, SDPI supports nearly 400 grants programs offered through IHS, tribal and urban Indian health programs. SDPI supported programs have resulted in a decrease of 13 percent in the mean blood sugar level (A1C) which translates to a 40 percent reduction in diabetes-complications. This new legislation would provide an increase of \$50 million per year for SDPI.

"I am proud of what the Special Diabetes Program for Indians has accomplished. This program has been life-saving to people who have diabetes, life-changing for those who have avoided diabetes because of early detection and prevention efforts, and perhaps most importantly, it is helping to ensure a diabetes-free future for our children and future generations," said Buford Rolin, vice-chairman of the National Indian Health Board and co-chair of the Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee.

The bill currently has 25 cosponsors and has been referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. There is an existing House bill, H.R. 3668, which was introduced last year by Representative Diana DeGette (CO). To view a legislative alert and sample letters to send to your representatives, visit [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org).



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*The Red Feather of Hope and Healing*

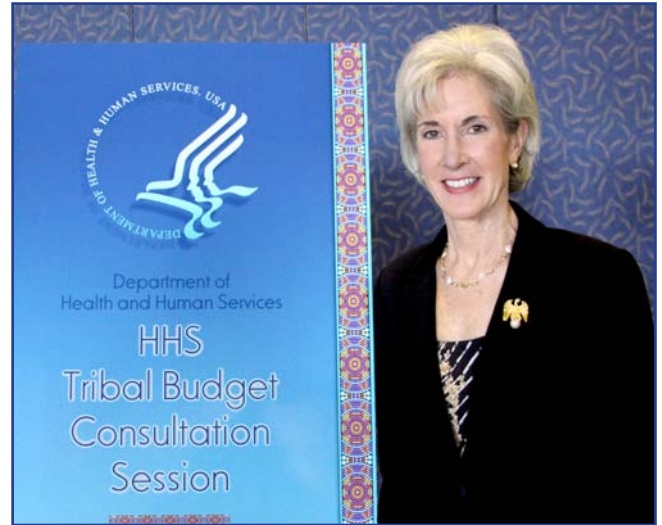
## Department of Health & Human Services Convenes National Tribal Budget Formulation and Consultation Session

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) held its Annual HHS National Tribal Budget Formulation and Consultation Session with tribal leaders last week. Tribal leaders testified and offered comments during the two day event held at the Hubert H. Humphrey Building in Washington DC. National Indian Health Board Members participating in the sessions included: NIHB Chairman Reno Franklin, NIHB Vice-Chairman Buford Rolin, Andy Joseph Jr., Cynthia Manuel, H. Sally Smith, Jerry Freddie, and Cathy Abramson.

Representing the Tribal Budget Workgroup, both Chairman Ned Norris of the Tohono O’Odham Nation and Chairman Mervin Wright of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe presented testimony to HHS officials regarding budget recommendations for FY 2012 for IHS. The workgroup recommended a \$735 million increase to the Indian Health Service budget. The workgroup ensued dialogue of how efforts can be made to fully fund the Indian Health Service during the Obama administration.

Several senior HHS officials were in attendance for the consultation sessions. The Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius, attended a session on the closing day of consultation to hear from tribal leaders. The Secretary highlighted the unique relationship that exists between tribes and the U.S. government as the basis for the consultation meetings. Tribal leaders provided recommendations to improve HHS programs in working with tribes and shared stories from home about the overall health care needs of tribal members.

During the meeting, Sebelius announced the establishment of new Secretary’s Tribal Advisory Council. In addition, the Secretary also announced the creation of a Tribal-Federal Work Group whose task it will be to review tribal comments, regional consultation reports and develop recommendations to improving the HHS Tribal consultation policy. The IHS Budget Formulation Workgroup recommended that a similar group should be established so that tribal recommendations from agencies across HHS could be coordinated and communicated at the Secretary level.



*Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius participated in the Tribal Budget Consultation Session*



*Swearing-in Ceremony of Lillian Sparks as the Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans*

A highlight of the meeting included Secretary Sebelius swearing in Lillian Sparks as Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans (ANA). The ANA provides financial assistance, training, and technical assistance to tribes, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiians. The Commissioner also serves as Chair of the Intra-Departmental Council on Native American Affairs (ICNAA) within HHS, and advises the HHS Secretary on Native American issues.

To learn more about HHS Consultation with Tribal Nations please visit:

<http://www.hhs.gov/intergovernmental/tribal/index.html>

## NIHB Board Members testify during the HHS Tribal Consultation



Reno Keoni Franklin, NIHB Chairman testifies to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius during the HHS Tribal Consultation Session



Cynthia Manuel, NIHB Secretary and Tucson Area Representative



Andy Joseph, Jr., NIHB Member at large & Portland Area Representative



H. Sally Smith, NIHB Board Member and Alaska Area Representative



Department of Health and Human Services 12th Annual National Tribal Budget Consultation Session in Washington, DC

## National Indian Health Board



For more information on this publication, or if you have any questions please contact NIHB's Legislative Director Jennifer Cooper  
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## Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Holds Budget Hearing

On February 25, 2010, the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs held a hearing on Indian programs in the President's Fiscal Year 2011 budget request. The committee heard testimony from Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, MD, MPH, Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS), on the budget request for the agency responsible for health care delivery for American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

The President's budget request for the Indian Health Service for Fiscal Year 2011 is \$4.4 billion, an 8.7% increase over the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations. Following the hearing, the committee submitted its "Views and Estimates" of the President's budget on March 5 to the Senate Budget Committee. The letter expressed support for the IHS request, which although received a strong increase, still remains funded at roughly half of needed funding.

## Call for Proposals are due **Monday, March 15, 2010** for NIHB Public Health Summit

The NIHB is holding its 2nd Annual Public Health Summit May 18-20, 2010 in Albuquerque, NM. The theme is, "2010: A New Decade of Indigenous Public Health". The NIHB invites you to submit an Abstract Proposal Form to present at our Summit. Visit [http://www.nihb.org/communications.conferences\\_events.php](http://www.nihb.org/communications.conferences_events.php) to access the **2010 Call for Proposals Instructions** or the **2010 Abstract Proposal Form**.

**Questions?** Contact [nihbphs2010@nihb.org](mailto:nihbphs2010@nihb.org) or call Audrey Solimon at (202) 507-4070.  
\*\* All proposed abstracts must be received by March 15, 2010 at 5:00 pm [EST]



National Indian Health Board

# NIHB Public Health Summit

Albuquerque, New Mexico  
May 18-20, 2010

Our American Indian and Alaska Native Communities enter a new decade where embracing public health interventions can only improve the lives of our families.

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*2010: A New Decade of Indigenous Public Health*