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National Indian Health Board Hosts Day Long Training and Celebration on Health Care Reform and IHCIA

On Wednesday, April 28, 2010, the National Indian Health Board hosted a training, luncheon and reception in Washington, DC for Indian Country on the newly enacted Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), including the permanent reauthorization of Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA).

Briefing on the New Health Care Reform Law and IHCIA

The training covered a variety of topics by many speakers, including: opening comments from Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, MD, MPH; a review of major provisions of PPACA from Doneg McDounough, former Legislative Director for Health Care for America Now; review of the process to enact the IHCIA into law by key Congressional staff; presentations on Indian specific provisions in PPACA and IHCIA by the National Indian Health Board, National Congress of American Indians and the National Council of Urban Indian Health, and other technical staff.

Major themes that emerged from the meeting were the new authorities provided in the IHCIA, and the need for increased funds for the Indian

Health Service. The meeting ended with a listening session to allow attendees to express specific questions.

NIHB Honors Key Leaders

Recognizing the significant effort over many years to reauthorize, NIHB hosted a luncheon to honor key individuals responsible for the passage of the IHCIA.

NIHB recognized the following individuals for their contributions to the passage of the IHCIA: Senator Byron Dorgan (ND), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs; Senator John Barrasso (WY), Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs; Senator Max Baucus (MT), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance; Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK); Representative Frank Pallone (NJ), Chairman, Subcommittee on Health; Representative Dale Kildee (MI), Chairman, Congressional Native American Caucus; Representative Nick Rahall (WV), Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources; Rachel Joseph, Co-Chair, National Steering Committee for the Reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (NSC); and Buford Rolin, Co-Chair, NSC.

Honorees were recognized during a luncheon, with H. Sally Smith, Alaska Area Representative for the National Indian Health Board, as Master of Ceremonies. Members of Congress were presented a commemorative plaque and tobacco bundle, and NSC Co-Chairs were each presented a Pendleton blanket.



Reception to Celebrate Permanent Reauthorization of the IHCIA

In the evening, a congressional reception was held to celebrate the permanent reauthorization of the IHCIA. Tribal leaders and others gathered in the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing room and heard from members of Congress about the permanent reauthorization including: Senator Byron Dorgan (ND), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs; Senator John Barrasso (WY), Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs; Senator Tom Udall (NM); Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK); and Representative Martin Heinrich (NM).

Mr. Robin Carufel of the Lac du Flambeau tribe of Michigan, along with members of his family, traveled to Washington, DC to honor the members of Congress and tribal leaders for their work with honor songs.

The reception was co-hosted by: the National Congress of American Indians; SENSE, Inc; the National Council of Urban Indian Health; Sonosky, Chambers, Sacshe, Miller and Munson, LLP; Hobbs, Straus, Dean and Walker; and Self-Governance Communication and Education Tribal Consortium.

Tribal Technical Advisory Group Holds Face-to-Face Meeting

The Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) held a face-to-face meeting in Washington, DC on April 29-30, 2010. TTAG is an advisory group to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on tribal issues. It meets in person four times each year to discuss issues that are important for Indian Country. The meeting was well attended, including senior staff from CMS and NIHB. A roundtable took place to discuss the HITECH Act, with TTAG members expressing concerns about how and when the implementation of electronic health records and “meaningful use” will take place. In addition,

TTAG members expressed the need for additional training and resources for Indian Country. The meeting also covered Tribal-State consultation and the new CMS administrator transition. For more information, visit www.cmsttag.org.

Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization Underway

The Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) is set to expire on Oct 1, 2011 if Congress does not renew it. The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) is leading an aggressive advocacy effort in Congress to ensure that this critical and successful program continues.

Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate and the list of cosponsors is growing. Currently the House bill, H.R.3668, has 236 cosponsors. The Senate bill, S 3058, has 43 cosponsors.

NIHB is working to educate Congress about the successes of SDPI and the strong return on the federal investment that it has produced. As in the past, NIHB and its partners in this campaign - the American Diabetes Association and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation - are seeking a multi-year extension a year early to avoid any interruption in the program funding and to provide the Indian Health Service with the ability to continue to plan and support multiyear programs.

The National Indian Health Board has information for individuals regarding SDPI on its website, www.nihb.org. Resources are available to contact Senators and Representatives to support SDPI reauthorization. Tribal leaders can call and ask members to support the bill, and to pass SDPI before it expires. The program has been successful in reducing A1C levels in American Indians and Alaska Natives, but more funds are needed and the program needs to continue.

