

National Indian Health Board



Our Vision: To Advocate on Behalf of All Tribal Governments and American Indians and Alaska Natives in Their Efforts to Provide Quality Health Care.

National Indian Health Board 2011 Policy Agenda

Approved by NIHB Board – January 17, 2011

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) is dedicated to advocating for the improvement in the delivery of health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives. To fulfill the organization's mission, the NIHB Board of Directors sets forth the following policy and legislative priorities that the NIHB will pursue at the national level for 2011.

- ❖ **Preserve the permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act and promote tribal priorities through all aspects of implementation of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act**
The Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) is the key baseline statutory authority for the delivery of health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives and after 11 years, this important authority was reauthorized permanently as part of the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The NIHB will continue to advocate and support the IHCIA in all arenas by:
 - Advocating for the preservation of the permanent reauthorization of the IHCIA
 - Assembling, developing and disseminating tribal perspective on the implementation of the IHCIA and keeping Indian Country informed on developments
 - Supporting the work of tribal advisory committees such as Tribal Technical Advisory Group to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, (TTAG) and Medicare and Medicaid Policy Committee (MMPC) through technical expertise and committee support
 - Working with Tribes, Tribal Organizations and the Indian Health Service (IHS) on education and outreach to Tribal leaders and members regarding the new IHCIA authorities

- ❖ **Support the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act through legislative and regulatory activities**
The Affordable Care Act provides a wealth of new resources and opportunities for tribal governments, health providers and individual American Indians and Alaska Natives. In addition to the IHCIA, many key Indian specific provisions were included in Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act) in order to (i) properly protect Indian people and the Indian health delivery system, and (ii) maximize their ability to enjoy the benefits offered by the Affordable Care Act. The NIHB will continue:
 - Advocating for the preservation of the permanent reauthorization of the Affordable Care Act
 - Assembling, developing and disseminating tribal perspective on the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and keeping Indian Country inform on implementation developments
 - Supporting the work of tribal advisory committees such as the Tribal Technical Advisory Group to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, (TTAG) and Medicare and Medicaid Policy Committee (MMPC) through technical expertise and committee support
 - Working with Tribes, Tribal Organizations and the Indian Health Service (IHS) on education and outreach to Tribal leaders and members regarding the Affordable Care Act



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The Red Feather of Hope and Healing

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❖ **Increase attention and program support for behavioral and mental health services and programs especially for the prevention of youth suicide incidences**

Currently, there is an overwhelming impact of mental illness, drug abuse, and other behavioral issues in Indian Country. Legislation and programs focused on this area will make major strides toward addressing the chronic behavioral issues throughout Indian Country. The NIHB is committed to addressing this serious issue by:

- Promoting Tribal priorities within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reauthorization
- Working with SAMHSA on how to improve the funding tribes to address these issues
- Advocating for the development of special program to address American Indian/Alaska Native youth suicide prevention

❖ **Promote solutions to address the shortage of health professionals in Indian Country**

Indian health programs have difficulty recruiting and retaining needed health care professionals. Competition for health care workforce personnel will intensify as millions of individuals enter the health marketplace and demand more services with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. This

- Providing support to the NIHB Representative to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Negotiated Rulemaking Committee on Designation of Medically Underserved Population and Health Professional Shortage Areas.
- Participating in the activities of Pathways into Health
- Analysis and Educate Indian Country on new opportunities in Affordable Care Act and create new private partnerships around health professions
- Advancing creation of residency training programs in Indian Country

❖ **Raise Awareness and Address Childhood Obesity in Indian Country**

- Continue to support and promote the activities around the Let's Move It and Let's Move Indian Country campaigns.

❖ **Secure Increased Indian Health Appropriations**

Each year the Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup to the Indian Health Service diligently works to synthesize the priorities identified by the Tribes in each of the geographic areas of the Indian Health Service into a cohesive message outlining Tribal funding priorities nationally. The outcome of this effort is a presentation of the Tribal priorities during the US Department of Health and Human Services Tribal Budget Consultation session, which takes place annually in early spring. These Tribal priorities are the foundation and roadmap for the work that NIHB does on behalf of Tribes in the pursuit of increased and adequate funding for health care services and programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

- Increase Contract Support Cost funding
- Increase in Contract Health Services
- Protect IHS funding from rescissions
- New authorized programs included in IHCA
- Increase access to block grant funding
- Improve AI/AN access to existing Long Term Care, home and community-based programs and sources of funding.
- Seek Veteran's Affairs reimbursement to IHS/Tribal facilities for services provided to AI/AN Veterans.

