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On March 7th, NIHB hosted a Tribal briefing and caucus in order to prepare Tribal Leaders to advocate for the continuation of SDPI. Each Tribe will receive a special letter from NIHB summarizing the meeting and asking for input on reauthorization request levels. For more information on this meeting and SDPI reauthorization, please contact Liz Malerba, Legislative Assistant, at Lmalerba@nihb.org.

ADMINISTRATION UPDATES

NIHB UPDATES

NIHB Legislative Alert: Ask Congress to Sign On to a Support Letter for SDPI

Established in 1997 for the prevention and treatment of diabetes in American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs), the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) is expiring at the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2013. As Congress begins to consider reauthorizing this life-saving program, broad-based support from Representatives and Senators is crucial. Members in each chamber are circulating bipartisan support letters for SDPI and its sister program, the Special Diabetes Program, which provides research dollars for type-1 diabetes. The support letters will be open until the end of March.

To ensure uninterrupted funding for both programs, Congress must pass reauthorization legislation this year. Please call your Representative and Senators, and ask them to add their names to these letters, which will remain open through the month of March. To view more information on the legislative alert, including the House and Senate support letters, click [here](#).

IHS Hosts 2012 Tribal Consultation Summit

The Indian Health Service (IHS) hosted its 2012 Tribal Consultation Summit on March 13-14th at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel in Arlington, VA. Intended to be a “one-stop-shop” to learn about IHS consultation activities, participants heard reports from the Director’s Advisory Workgroup on Consultation, the Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee, and the Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee. A variety of breakout sessions on current consultation topics were also held including, Contract Health Services, Long-Term Care, Contract Support Costs, and the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). IHS also held a consultation on its draft agreement with the Veteran’s Administration on reimbursement for services.

For more information, including the agenda and registration booklet, click [here](#).



CMS Releases Final Medicaid Rule

On March 16th, Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced final policies that will ensure that millions of uninsured Americans will have a simple, seamless path to affordable health insurance coverage.

The Affordable Care Act makes Medicaid available to individuals between ages 19 and 64 with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level – currently \$14,856 for an individual and \$30,656 for a family of four. These changes will become effective in 2014 when Affordable Insurance Exchanges begin operation. The federal government will pay 100 percent of the cost of the Medicaid expansion for the first three years and at least 90 percent after that.

The policies announced recently were first proposed in August 2011. After the proposed rule was issued, HHS participated in listening sessions across the country to hear comments and suggestions from a diverse array of stakeholders. In addition, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) held a national eligibility conference attended by states and other stakeholders and conducted numerous conference calls and webinars to solicit public input. In response, the final rule provides additional protections for consumers, as well as additional flexibilities and options for states.

The final rule also makes it easier for eligible individuals and families to enroll in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) by cutting back on red tape and coordinating enrollment with the new Affordable Insurance Exchanges. Families will be able to enroll in the appropriate coverage program through a single, streamlined, online application and states will have the benefit of reduced administrative costs.

The rule builds on state efforts to modernize the eligibility, enrollment, and renewal processes in Medicaid and CHIP. This final rule and the recently issued Affordable Insurance Exchange final rule are building a seamless system of coverage so that, in 2014, Medicaid, CHIP and the Affordable Insurance Exchanges will work

together to efficiently meet consumers' health care needs, improve quality and lower costs.

To learn more about this final rule, visit:

<http://www.medicaid.gov/AffordableCareAct/Provisions/Eligibility.html>.

Indian Health Service (IHS) Director, Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, has released a blog post summarizing some of the rule's effects upon health care delivery in Indian Country. To view the blog post, click [here](#).

Administration releases Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Preventive Services Policy

Officials at the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Labor, and the Treasury took the next step in the Obama administration's effort to ensure women access to recommended preventive services while respecting religious liberty. The Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued recently outlines draft proposals to implement the policy announced by President Barack Obama and HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius on Feb. 10, 2012. This policy will provide women with access to recommended preventive services including contraceptives without cost sharing, while ensuring that non-profit religious organizations are not forced to pay for, provide, or facilitate the provision of any contraceptive service they object to on religious grounds. The Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking gives all Americans the chance to formally comment on ideas for implementing this policy.

Administration officials also released a final rule governing student health plans. Under the final rule, students will gain the same consumer protections other people with individual market insurance have, like a prohibition on lifetime limits and coverage of preventive services without cost sharing. In the same way that religious colleges and universities will not have to pay, arrange or refer for contraceptive coverage for their employees, they will not have to do so for their students who will get such coverage directly and separately from their insurer.



The *Federal Register* advance notice concerning women's preventive services calls for a 90-day public comment period. The departments will also hold listening sessions.

The advance notice of proposed rulemaking on women's preventive services and the student health plan final rule is available in the *Federal Register* at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2012/03/21/2012-06689/certain-preventive-services-under-affordable-care-act>.

For more information on women's preventive services, visit:

<http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/2011/08/womensprevention08012011a.html>

For more information on the student health plan final rule, visit:

<http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/2012/03/student-health-plans03162012a.html>

VA/IHS Consultation Comments Due April 4

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)/Indian Health Service (IHS) are initiating consultation to facilitate VA reimbursement for services provided by IHS and Tribal health facilities to eligible American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans. Comments are due in 30 days from the date of the letter.

Click [here](#) to read the "Dear Tribal Leader Letter"

Click [here](#) to read a summary of the draft agreement between the IHS and the VA.

HHS Announces Vacancies on Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee

In 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) created a Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC), which has successfully been meeting for a little over a year. The STAC was one of the first Cabinet Level Tribal Advisory Committees to any Secretary in the Administration and HHS is grateful to the Tribal Leaders who are current members for their

dedication and partnership. To date five meetings of the STAC have occurred. Secretary Sebelius, Tribal STAC members, and senior leadership from HHS, together, have been working to focus collective efforts to improve how HHS works with Tribes, delivers services and reduces barriers to access of HHS programs and services. HHS currently has three vacancies on the STAC and is requesting nominations for these vacancies.

Primary Delegate Nominations:

- 1-National At Large Delegate
- California Area

Alternate Delegate Nominations:

- Oklahoma Area

HHS encourages Tribal leaders to submit nomination letters no later than **Friday April 13, 2012**. If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Stacey Ecoffey at Stacey.Ecoffey@hhs.gov. You may either fax your nomination to 202-205-2727 or email it to STAC@hhs.gov.

For more information, click [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS HEARING ON, "THE CENTER FOR CONSUMER INFORMATION AND INSURANCE OVERSIGHT AND THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT."

DATE: MARCH 21

TIME: 10:00 AM

LOCATION: 2123 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES, "AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE PUBLIC WITNESS" HEARINGS

DATES: MARCH 27-28

LOCATION: B-308 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515



Save the Date

**Tribal Health Reform: National Training
on the Affordable Care Act and the
Indian Health Care Improvement Act**

Hosted by NCAI and NIHB
through support of the National Indian Health
Outreach and Education (NIHOE) partnership with
the Indian Health Service

**Mystic Lake Casino
Prior Lake, MN
April 18-19, 2012**

You are cordially invited to attend
**National Indian Health Board's
29th ANNUAL CONSUMER
CONFERENCE**

Celebrating
NIHB'S 40th Anniversary

**September 24- 28, 2012
DENVER, COLORADO**

Sign Up for Washington Report, at:

http://www.nihb.org/legislative/washington_report.php

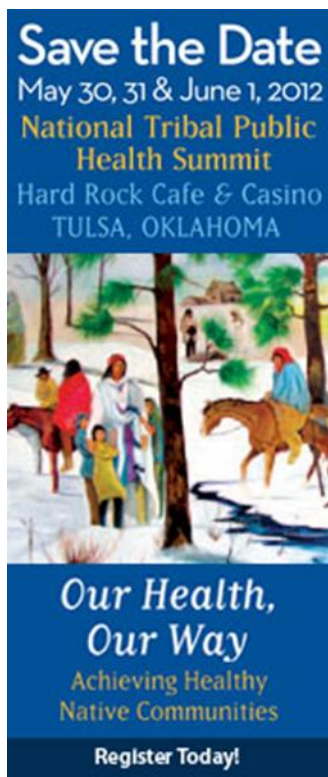
For More Information Contact:

Jennifer Cooper, JD, Legislative Director


jcooper@nihb.org or

Liz Malerba, Legislative

Assistant lmalerba@nihb.org



Save the Date
May 30, 31 & June 1, 2012
**National Tribal Public
Health Summit**
Hard Rock Cafe & Casino
TULSA, OKLAHOMA



**Our Health,
Our Way**
Achieving Healthy
Native Communities

Register Today!

