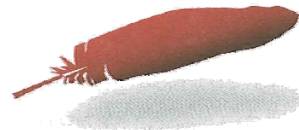


# National Indian Health Board



January 7, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader

Re: Importance of Preserving the Affordable Care Act and Indian Health Care Improvement Reauthorization

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), we urge the House of Representatives not to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Affordable Care Act), which includes the permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA). From the perspective of Indian Country, the passage of the Affordable Care Act – inclusive of the IHCIA – is the most significant advancement in Federal health policy for America's indigenous people. The repeal of this law, and with it, the IHCIA, would strike a tremendously damaging blow to the promise of improving the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The Affordable Care Act provides a wealth of new resources and opportunities for both tribal health and mainstream health care institutions, families, providers and patients. This law increases access to health care coverage for all Americans, including American Indians and Alaska Natives. It will also provide greater employment opportunities and training for health care professionals for both Native and mainstream America, which will result in more jobs and improve delivery of health care for all Americans. Just a few examples of specific and substantial improvements to American and American Indian health care contained in the Affordable Care Act include:

1. Modernizes the Indian health care system for the first time in two decades;
2. Provides expanded eligibilities and programs to address gaps in care across generations from youth to elders;
3. Expands authorities to establish long term care facilities and services;
4. Creates the authority for establishing hospice care in Indian Country;
5. Greatly expands access to preventative services - proven to save substantial health care dollars that would otherwise be spent in the direct provision of health care;
6. Provides assistance to support the costs of Seniors participating in Medicare Part D;
7. Mitigates the effects of the "Donut Hole" on Indian Health Service (IHS) programs;
8. Provides for increasing the number of health care professionals in America, achieving both employment opportunity and health professionals infrastructure enhancement at both the community and Tribal levels;



926 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE | Washington, DC 20003 | 202-507-4070 | 202-507-4071 fax | [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org)

*The Red Feather of Hope and Healing*

By repealing the Affordable Care Act, Congress also would erase its achievement of the long-overdue reauthorization of the IHCIA, which is the fundamental statutory authority for the delivery of health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The IHCIA was last significantly amended in 1992 and for nearly two decades, Indian Country waited and worked desperately for updates to the Indian health delivery system. Now, with the inclusion of the permanent reauthorization of the IHCIA in Affordable Care Act, the Indian health care system has begun a new chapter in the delivery of quality health care to American Indians and Alaska Natives.

As the House considers the importance of the health care reform, I respectfully ask again that you do not repeal the Affordable Care Act and, with it, the IHCIA. Thank you for your consideration and if the National Indian Health Board can be of assistance, please contact NIHB's Legislative Director Jennifer Cooper at (202) 507-4076 or [jcooper@nihb.org](mailto:jcooper@nihb.org).

Sincerely,



Reno Keoni Franklin  
Chairman  
National Indian Health Board

