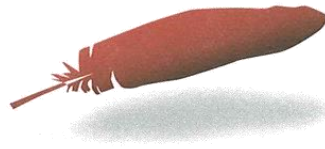


# National Indian Health Board



May 18, 2015

## **NIHB Elevates Indian Health Priorities on Capitol Hill and at the US Department of Health and Human Services**

On Wednesday, May 13, 2015, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) Board Members Patrick Marcellais and Andy Joseph as well as NIHB Executive Director Stacy Bohlen met with key Members of Congress and the Administration to discuss Indian health priorities. Topics included increased appropriations for the Indian Health Service (IHS), support for Advance Appropriations for the IHS, achieving Medicare-Like Rates for payment of IHS Purchased/Referred Care and elevation of Tribal youth issues.



*NIHB Great Plains Area Board Member Patrick Marcellais meets with Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Chair of the Senate Democratic Steering and Policy Committee*

### *Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee*

Mr. Marcellais and Ms. Bohlen participated in a roundtable with the Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee on Native American issues. Leaders from across Indian Country were present to discuss important needs of Tribal communities. On behalf of NIHB, Board Member Marcellais discussed the Tribes' support for advance appropriations for IHS; the need for

increased funding at IHS; and changing the way the Federal Government does business so as to remove obstacles Tribes face when attempting to access federal programs that impact AI/AN health. The Senators expressed support for Tribal Communities and drew specific attention to substance abuse and mental health concerns in Indian Country. In addition to Chairwoman Klobuchar, NIHB's concerns were heard by Senate Minority Leader Reid (NV) and Senators Ben Cardin (MD); Chuck Schumer (NY); Jon Tester (MT, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Vice Chairman); Richard Blumenthal (CT), Al Franken (MN); Jeff Merkley (OR).

Following the roundtable, NIHB met with staff from the Senate Committee of Indian Affairs to discuss the aforementioned key policy issues, but also to invite the Committee to participate in NIHB's upcoming Youth Summit in September 2015. The Committee expressed strong interest

in hearing from Native youth during NIHB's Native Youth Tribal Health Summit, which will take place September 17 – 21, 2015 in Washington, DC. The Committee is very interested in Native Youth perspectives on health, wellness, nutrition and mental/behavioral concerns. NIHB will work with Committee members and staff to develop a Capitol Hill day, Tribal Youth Health Roundtable and the Hill Native Youth Health Film Festival to take place during the NIHB Youth Summit.

*Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup Presentation of FY 2017 Tribal Indian Health Service Budget to the Department of Health and Human Services*

In the afternoon, Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup Co-Chairs Andy Joseph (NIHB At-Large Board Member) and Gary Hayes, presented the Workgroup's FY 2017 Tribal Budget Request for the IHS to top Budget Officials at the Department of Health and Human Services. During this meeting, the leaders shared the recommendation to fully fund IHS at \$29.96 billion. Key priorities for the budget include Hospitals and Clinics; Purchased/Referred Care; Dental Services; Mental Health; Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services.

"It is time to write a new future for American Indians and Alaska Natives and propose a budget that fully funds Native health," said Councilman Hayes. A key question from the agency officials centered on how to best design programs to be effective for Native youth. The Tribal leaders noted that additional funding for youth programming going directly to Tribes is critical. Mr. Marcellais, who also participated in the meeting said, "If you want to know what's happening with Native Youth -- ask them."



*Tribal leaders present FY 2017 budget priorities to officials at the Department of Health and Human Services.*

The Department will begin to work on its FY 2017 Budget Request this summer. The input received from Tribal leaders will be critical as they determine the budget priorities for IHS. Because this the last Budget that will be proposed by the Obama Administration, there is a critical opportunity to achieve a lasting legacy for Indian health funding. You can read the full Tribal recommendation for FY 2017 on [NIHB's website](#).

*Meeting with North Dakota Senators*

NIHB also met with Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) to discuss key priorities. Senator Heitkamp is very interested in ensuring that all AI/ANs are accessing the benefits intended for them under the Affordable Care Act. NIHB provided information on the outreach and education efforts NIHB provides throughout Indian Country. NIHB also discussed legislation to achieve a Medicare Like Rate (MLR) for non-hospital services for Purchased/Referred Care (PRC) for IHS. This change would save hundreds of millions of dollars to the PRC program each year. Senator Heitkamp is

eager to continue leadership on this issue. NIHB commented that the proposed legislation should ensure that the MLR is enforceable and not create access to care issues in remote areas. Finally, NIHB also invited Senator Heitkamp to participate in NIHB's Youth Summit, as she is a leader on Native youth issues in Congress.



*NIHB meets with Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) to discuss Tribal health and youth issues.*

NIHB also met with staff from Senator John Hoeven (R-ND) and reiterated Tribal health priorities. Senator Hoeven is a member of the Appropriations Committee, specifically the Interior Subcommittee, which allocates annual funding for the Indian Health Service. NIHB provided information on NIHB's youth outreach work and encouraged the Senator to be involved.

For more information about NIHB's work, visit [www.nihb.org](http://www.nihb.org).