



AUGUST LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

August 2024 has been a lively and impactful month for Urban American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) advocacy. It began with an important HHS Tribal consultation on August 5, focusing on the syphilis outbreak among AIAN populations. On August 6, the California State Native American Legislative Caucus combined meaningful discussions with a celebratory awards ceremony recognizing key contributors. The momentum continued on August 20, when the IHS California Area Tribal Advisory Committee (CATAC) tackled budget shifts, Regional Specialty Centers, and critical policy updates. On August 23, the DHCS Tribes and Indian Health Program Representative Meeting brought hot topics to the table, including Traditional Healers, the status of Unwinding, and strategies to best reach our community. With the California Legislature racing toward its August 31 deadline, there's a strong push to pass bills shaping the future for Urban AIAN communities. Looking ahead, the upcoming CCUIH Conference and November elections are set to keep the energy high and the focus sharp.

STATE UPDATES

IHS California Area Tribal Advisory Committee (CATAC) August 20

- **Budget and Funding Updates**
 - **Transition to Mandatory Authority:** Discuss moving budget allocations from discretionary to mandatory based on FY25 budget appropriations.
 - **Senate Bill:** Includes \$3 million for urban health, with funding levels determined by actual need.
- **Regional Specialty Centers:**
 - Progress noted, with Sacramento and San Diego already providing letters of support.
- **Policy and Program Updates**
 - **"4 Walls" Policy:**
 - Proposed tribal exemption discussed.
 - Urban centers would be limited to Behavioral Health services.
 - Comments on this proposal are due by September 9.
- **PRC (Purchased/Referred Care) Program:**
 - **Inaccurate Data Concerns:** The impact of inaccurate data on funding allocations was discussed.
 - **PRC Reimbursement Program:** Issues related to obligated balances and carryover were reviewed.
 - **PRCDA (Purchased/Referred Care Delivery Area):** Emphasize the importance of accurate data to ensure appropriate resource allocation.
- **Health and Emergency Response**
 - **Syphilis Outbreak:**
 - Emphasized the need for collaboration with local health agencies to combat the outbreak.

- **Emergency Response:**

- Coordination efforts were highlighted, with Carolyn Garcia as the point of contact for emergency response initiatives.

CA Native American Legislative Caucus & CA Indian Cultural Awareness Event August

- In addition to legislative discussions, the California State Native American Legislative Caucus meeting on August 6, 2024, featured a reception and networking opportunities for attendees. The event also included an awards ceremony recognizing individuals and organizations' contributions to advancing Native American issues in the state. This combination of legislative work and community-building activities helped strengthen relationships among lawmakers, advocates, and community members, furthering collaborative efforts to address key concerns facing Native American communities in California.

Department of Health Care Services (DHCS):

- [August 26, 2024 Tribes and Indian Health Program Representatives Meeting 930-4pm](#)
- **DHCS Update:**
 - The rate increase is delayed until the 2025 or 2026 fiscal year, with BCHIP funding being eliminated and BRIDGE funding delayed until July 1, 2025.
 - Members requested that the titles of State Plan Amendments (SPAs) be included in the email subject lines for clarity.
 - Community Health Workers (CHWs) will see an increased reimbursement rate to 100% of Medicare. Guidance is needed to improve billing encounters and utilize the all-inclusive rate. Additionally, work is ongoing to categorize Traditional Healers and Natural Helpers' duties into a billable platform, with DHCS planning to contact them for more information.
 - DHCS is expanding the Transforming Maternal Health Model as a pilot project in specific regions, including Kern County and the Bakersfield Indian Health Project.
 - The "Unwinding" process ended on May 31, 2024, with 90% renewals, primarily hindered by unreturned renewal packets. A summary of redetermination statistics for AI/AN Medi-Cal members was presented, and slides will be made available later.
 - A new Interactive Map of Medi-Cal Enrolled Indian Health Care Providers (IHCPs) will be released soon.
- **State Plan Amendments (SPAs):**
 - **Summary of Proposed Changes:** DHCS is seeking approval for SPA 24-0039 from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to eliminate the APM reimbursement for COVID-19 vaccine-only

administration visits for FQHCs, RHCs, and THPs, effective October 1, 2024. [Comments Due September 13](#)

- **Summary of Proposed Changes:** This SPA proposes adding Enhanced Community Health Worker (CHW, or Community Health Representative, CHR) Services as a preventive service for Medi-Cal members with significant behavioral health needs. [Comments Due September 22](#)
- **Summary of Proposed Changes:** DHCS is seeking to expand the list of providers supervising CHW/Rs to include pharmacies. Currently, the State Plan lists CBOs, LHJs, licensed providers, hospitals, and clinics as defined in Title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations section 440.90 to supervise CHW/Rs. The expanded list of providers who can supervise CHW/Rs would include providers in both the fee-for-service (FFS) and managed care delivery systems. The proposed effective date for State Plan Amendment (SPA) 24-0037 is October 1, 2024. [Comments Due September 22](#)

The California State Legislature is in its final month of the regular legislative session, scheduled to adjourn on August 31, 2024. During this period, the Assembly and the Senate are actively finalizing and passing bills before the session concludes. The focus is on reviewing and voting on bills that have made it through the committee stages and addressing any last-minute legislative priorities.

- Both houses of the legislature are currently on a brief recess, with the Assembly adjourned until August 26, 2024. Many bills are still under consideration, including thirteen privacy and AI-related bills that have previously crossed chambers. The final days of August will be critical as lawmakers work to pass the remaining legislation before the session ends.
- Below are **current results of selected bills by category of status (definitions of the legislative process)**:
 - **Held Under Submission**
 - AB 1965: Public health. Office of Tribal Affairs.
 - **Ordered to third reading**
 - AB 1799: Child abuse: Reporting
 - AB 2108: Foster care: missing children and nonminor dependents.
 - AB 2138: Peace officers: tribal police pilot project.
 - AB 2711 Suspensions and expulsions: voluntary disclosures.
 - AB 2795: CalWORKs Indian Health Clinic Program.
 - SB 1067: Healing arts: expedited licensure process: medically underserved area or population
 - SB 1382: Community and rural health clinics: building standards.
 - **Read third time and amended. Ordered to second reading**
 - AB 2250 Social determinants of health: screening and outreach
 - **Ordered to Engrossing & Enrolling**

- AB 1863 California Emergency Services Act: notification systems: Feather Alert.
- **Chaptered**
 - AB 1955: Support Academic Futures and Educators for Today's Youth Act. Chapter 95, Statutes of 2024.
 - ACR-166: The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. Chapter 151, Statutes of 2024.

FEDERAL UPDATES

- **Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer Health IT Modernization Program: Multi-Tenant Domain Considerations** These sessions aim to gather feedback on various aspects of the modernization program, including system configuration, deployment planning, and site readiness. The first session is on February 8, with subsequent sessions in May, August, and November. Participants can register online, and written comments are encouraged within 30 days of each session.
- IHS Dear Tribal and Urban Leader Letters (DTLL/DULL)
 - [August 12, 2024 Climate Change Resources](#)
- **White House Council on native American Affairs (WHCNAA) Homeless Veterans Initiative Workgroup**
 - A charter for WHCNAA is being drafted.
 - Emphasis on inviting UIOs for more in-depth collaboration
- **National Consortium for Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) Monthly Policy Workgroup**
 - **FMAP Updates**
 - Urban Indian Health Parity Act was included in the House Energy Commerce Minority's priorities for a hearing.
 - Working to secure a Republican Senator to co-lead the Senate version of the Urban Indian Health Parity Act (H.R. 6533)
 - CCUIH submitted a joint letter request with NCUIH
 - If you would like to write a letter, NCUIH or CCUIH are happy to help. Please contact policy@ncuih.org or nanette@ccuih.org
 - **S. 1723/H.R. 7227 Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act of 2023**
 - Expected to pass the Senate.
 - Senators of HI and AK filed a bipartisan amendment attaching the bill to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)
 - **Telehealth for Tribal Communities**
 - Introduced by Rep Leger Fernandez (D-NM)
 - This bill would make permanent a COVID-19 Public Health Emergency temporary provision allowing audio-only telehealth services for Medicare beneficiaries receiving care through Indian health programs or urban Indian Organizations (UIOs)
- **Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis Outbreak Tribal Consultation August 5, 2024**, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) will hold a Tribal consultation to address syphilis and congenital

syphilis outbreak among Tribal citizens. HHS has established the National Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis Syndemic Federal Task Force, involving multiple federal agencies, to optimize screening, expand access to testing and treatment, and increase awareness. The consultation aims to gather input from Tribal leaders to inform Task Force initiatives and identify priorities and successful models for addressing the epidemic. **Written comments are accepted until September 5, 2024 – CCUIH is gathering information and submitting it to NCUIH.**

POLICY ENGAGEMENTS IN AUGUST

- CMS Leadership National Call Update
- Covered CA Tribal Advisory Workgroup
- OASH Tribal Consultation for Syphilis and Congenital Syphilis
- CPEHN Board Meeting
- CPCA Biweekly Member
- RAC Monthly Directors
- NCUIH Policy Workgroup
- OUIHP Urban Program Executive Directors
- Health Career Connection Intern and Workforce
- ITUP Policy Group: LA and Orange County
- Pathfinder Council Meeting
- Behavioral Health Equity Collaboration
- Indian Health Cal-AIM Collaborative
- Racial Equity Commission
- CPCA Legislative and Regulatory
- California Racial Equity Coalition: Department and Agency Accountability/ Advocacy
- AB 2795 Asm. Arambula
- CA Dental Therapy
- CATAC
- DHCS: Tribes and Indian Health Program Representative Meeting

UPCOMING

- [Policy Link Annual Conference Equity Summit 8/26-28](#)
- [CCUIH Conference](#) September 10-11, 2024, Shingle Springs, CA
- [Association of American Indian Physicians \(AAIP\) Annual Conference 09/05](#)
 - NCUIH presenting on Traditional Healing

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