



2025 March Legislative Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The March 2025 Legislative Report highlights CCUIH's advocacy at both the federal and state levels to ensure Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) are prioritized in key policy decisions. At the federal level, CCUIH participated in the California Area IHS Urban Confer, emphasizing IHS accountability, data transparency, and financial stability for UIOs. As federal budget cuts loom, CCUIH is ramping up advocacy to protect UIO funding following the recent stopgap extension. The report also addresses potential IHS lease terminations and the urgent need for continued support. On the state side, CCUIH is advancing legislation on healthcare expansion, telehealth, and workforce development, with several priority bills moving forward. Additionally, DHCS released the long-awaited BHIN on reimbursement for Traditional Healers and Natural Helpers under the 1115 waiver—an important milestone for culturally responsive care. CCUIH will host an informational session for UIOs on March 31 to support implementation.

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (IHS) UPDATES

- **Urban Confer Session Held** – CCUIH participated in the CA Area Office Urban Confer on March 12, 2025, in Buellton. Topics included PRCDA expansion, data transparency, the IHS reorganization, Traditional Healing under the 1115 Waiver, and UIO financial stability.
 - **CCUIH Talking Points** – Delivered key asks on improving UIO data accuracy, maintaining urban support under the new IHS structure, expanding Traditional Healing access, and planning for potential Medicaid cuts.
 - **Follow-Up**– CCUIH will follow up with IHS on data transparency, UIO engagement in planning efforts, and written response requests related to agency reorganization and urban health priorities.
 - **Letter to Interim Director Ben Smith** – CCUIH will send a letter in the coming week outlining concerns and requesting formal clarification on UIO support and funding protections.
- **[NCUIH Testimony to Senate Committee](#)**
On **March 17, 2025**, NCUIH submitted written testimony to the **Senate Committee on Indian Affairs**, urging Congress to protect IHS, Urban Indian Health, and related funding streams.
 - **Potential Impact to UIOs:** Strengthens national advocacy and visibility for UIO funding needs and reinforces Congressional awareness of urban health priorities.
- **[Federal Lease Terminations Potentially Impacting IHS Sites](#)**
Reported in **March 2025**, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) announced plans to terminate leases for several IHS-operated federal office spaces as a cost-cutting measure.
 - **Potential Impact to UIOs:** While California does not have IHS-operated clinics, reductions in IHS facility services in other states could lead to increased migration of tribal members to urban areas, potentially raising demand for UIO services. Additionally, broader federal funding shifts within IHS may impact

overall Indian Health allocations, reinforcing the need for continued advocacy to protect UIO funding.

- **Tribal Management Grants Awarded**

On **March 17, 2025**, IHS announced awards through the [Tribal Management Grant Program](#) to support tribal self-governance planning and capacity-building.

- **Potential Impact to UIOs:** While UIOs are not eligible applicants, there may be opportunities to collaborate with awarded Tribes on planning, data-sharing, or regional health coordination efforts, particularly in shared service areas. UIOs should consider engaging with Tribal grantees to support urban-inclusive strategies.

- **Funding to Combat Opioid Epidemic** (scroll to page 6 in hyperlink)

On **March 6, 2025**, IHS allocated **\$9.5 million** to support opioid use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services in tribal communities.

- **Potential Impact for UIOs:** UIOs may benefit through collaboration with Tribes or IHS programs receiving funds. Continued advocacy is needed to ensure future opioid funding specifically includes urban populations.

- **Upcoming Events**

- [Tribal Self-Governance Annual Conference](#)

April 7–10, 2025 | Chandler, AZ

- **Potential Impact to UIOs:** Offers a platform to promote UIO collaboration and inclusion in self-determination and system design efforts.

- [NCUIH Annual Conference](#)

April 22–25, 2025 | Washington, DC

- **Potential Impact to UIOs:** Key opportunity for UIO leaders to engage in federal advocacy, participate in board development, and strengthen national coordination. CCUIH will provide talking points and attend representative meetings during **Day on the Hill** on April 25 with Member UIOs to advance policy priorities and funding needs.

CALIFORNIA STATE UPDATES

[DHCS BHIN on TH/NH 1115 Waiver Reimbursement Released](#) DHCS released the long-awaited Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) related to reimbursement for Traditional Healers and Natural Helpers under the Medi-Cal 1115 waiver on Friday, March 22. This marks a significant step forward, and CCUIH is moving ahead to support UIOs in implementation.

A **CCUIH-hosted informational session** is scheduled for **Monday, March 31st from 11:00 AM–12:30 PM**. A calendar invitation has already been sent—please forward to appropriate staff.

Legislation Moving Forward

CCUIH is actively tracking 73 bills related to healthcare, behavioral health, Medicaid, telehealth, workforce development, and tribal policy. Key themes emerging from this legislation include:

- **Medi-Cal and healthcare expansion** – Several bills focus on expanding Covered California eligibility, enhancing Medi-Cal trauma screenings, and ensuring stable funding for community health centers.
- **Telehealth and specialty care** – Proposals advancing in the legislature aim to expand telehealth reimbursement and establish specialty care networks, ensuring broader access for UIOs and underserved populations.
- **Behavioral health and workforce development** – Bills related to mental health workforce expansion, full-service behavioral health partnerships, and community health worker reimbursement continue moving through committee.
- **Tribal and AI/AN-specific legislation** – Proposals strengthening tribal policing, judicial authority, and economic grant funding remain under legislative review.
- **Public health and reproductive health** – Key bills address maternal health, reproductive care access, and health equity policies, which could directly affect AI/AN healthcare services.

These bills are progressing through committee hearings and legislative votes, with CCUIH continuing to monitor and engage in advocacy efforts to ensure the needs of UIOs and AI/AN communities remain prioritized.

FEDERAL UPDATES

Federal Stopgap Budget

On March 14, 2025, Congress passed a six-month continuing resolution (CR) to extend government funding through September 30, 2025. Key provisions relevant to UIOs and community health include:

- **Telehealth Extensions:** The legislation extends Medicare telehealth waivers through September 30, 2025, allowing AI/AN patients to access virtual care without in-person visit requirements. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) can continue to provide telehealth services under Medicare.
- **Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) Payments:** The bill delays scheduled Medicaid DSH cuts, ensuring continued financial support for hospitals serving high volumes of Medicaid and uninsured patients.
- **Medicaid Work Requirements:** The administration is exploring Medicaid work requirements, which, if enacted, could create barriers for AI/AN patients. Advocacy efforts continue to push for tribal exemptions from these requirements.
- **Public Health and UIO Funding:** The bill maintains community health center funding, but specific allocations for UIOs remain unclear. Further analysis is needed to determine the long-term funding outlook for UIO programs.

Executive Branch – Trump Administration Actions

- **Department of Education Dismantling:** The administration initiated steps to dismantle the Department of Education, shifting authority to states. This action will require congressional approval and is expected to face legal challenges.
- **Rescission of Federal Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs:** Executive Order 14173 eliminated DEI programs across federal agencies, potentially reducing funding and resources for AI/AN-specific health initiatives.

- **English as the Official Language Executive Order:** The administration issued Executive Order 14224, designating English as the official language of the U.S., which could affect federal agency communications and services.
- **Communication Restrictions on Federal Health Agencies:** A directive was issued to pause public communications from the Indian Health Service (IHS) and other health agencies, potentially delaying critical updates for UIOs.

Judiciary Actions

- **Legal Challenges to Executive Orders:** Several lawsuits have been filed in response to the administration's executive orders, particularly regarding the dismantling of the Department of Education and DEI program rescissions. The outcomes of these cases could have implications for federal agency operations and funding structures.

What's Next

- **FY2026 Federal Budget Proposal** – The Trump administration is expected to release its full proposal in the coming weeks. Early indications suggest significant proposed cuts to non-defense discretionary programs, which could impact IHS, Medicaid, and UIO funding.
- **House and Senate Disagreement on Budget Reconciliation** – As of late March, the House and Senate have **not reached an agreement on a budget reconciliation framework** or the scope of proposed federal cuts. This ongoing impasse adds to uncertainty about long-term funding for Indian health programs and Medicaid.
- **Medicaid Work Requirements** – Proposed federal legislation includes imposing work requirements for Medicaid eligibility. While past versions included tribal exemptions, it is unclear whether those protections will remain.
- **Executive Orders on Healthcare** – Additional executive orders related to healthcare policy, Medicaid restructuring, or tribal consultation processes are expected. CCUIH is monitoring for developments that could impact UIOs and their patients.

What We Are Watching

- **Legal Challenges to Executive Orders:** Several lawsuits have been filed challenging the administration's policies, including the rescission of DEI programs and changes to education policy. Their outcomes could affect federal program funding and health equity initiatives.
- **Congressional Appropriations Process:** The stopgap budget only extends funding through September 30, 2025. A full appropriations bill must be passed before then, and CCUIH will be monitoring potential funding shifts affecting UIOs.
- **Public Health Emergency Preparedness Programs:** Federal agencies are restructuring emergency preparedness funding, which could shift resources away from UIOs and community-based public health programs.

SHAPING AI/AN HEALTH POLICY: Where We've Been

The CCUIH policy team has been actively engaged in key advocacy, strategy, and policy discussions shaping AI/AN health. This month's activities included:

- **NIHB Tribal Health Equity Data Symposium** – Traveled to Washington, DC, to participate in national discussions on advancing AI/AN health data equity, tribal public health infrastructure, and federal funding priorities.
- **CPCA All Member and Board Meetings** – Participated in special board meetings focused on Medi-Cal, provider reimbursement, and tribal health alignment.
- **California Area Urban Confer** – Participated in IHS Urban Confer discussions focused on protecting UIOs, strengthening IHS accountability, improving data transparency, and addressing concerns related to the agency’s recent reorganization and urban health funding.
- **San Diego Site Visit** – Conducted a site visit to meet with local UIO leadership and discuss regional AI/AN health priorities.
- **CDPH Presentation on the Indian Health Ecosystem** – Delivered a presentation to CDPH staff on the structure and role of the Indian health ecosystem in California, including how UIOs, tribal health programs, and state partnerships intersect to serve AI/AN communities.
- **MMIP Panel Participation** – Served as a panelist at an MMIP policy event, providing legislative updates and public health context on California MMIP-related bills.
- **Legislative Advocacy & Coalition Work** – Supported racial equity, MMIP, and public health funding advocacy through coalition engagement and legislative briefings.
- **Support for UIOs on TH/NH Implementation** – Continued internal coordination and policy support around Traditional Health and Natural Helper services, preparing for future engagement with UIOs and counties on implementation planning.
- **CDPH Tribal Health Equity Advisory Group (THEAG)** – Planning to attend the March 26 meeting to contribute to statewide AI/AN public health equity discussions.
- **Budget Subcommittees on Health and Human Services** – Preparing for participation in the March 26 Budget Subcommittee No. 2 Informational Hearing to ensure UIOs are represented in state public health and Medi-Cal funding priorities.

The CCUIH policy team can provide notes or talking points upon request for any meetings or updates.