



Health Care for American Indians Living in Urban Communities in California

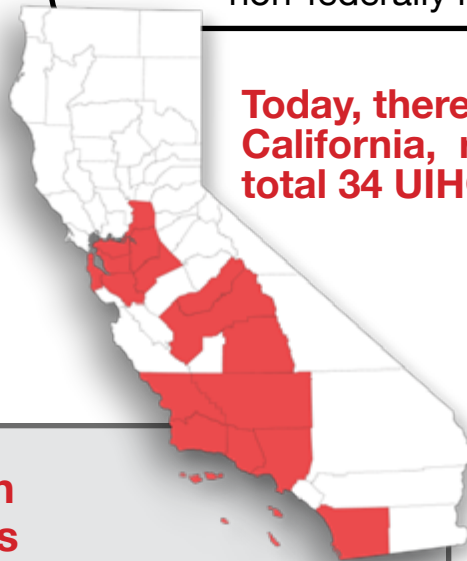
What We Do:

- Policy Monitoring and Advocacy
- Research and Evaluation
- Community Initiatives
- Training and Technical Assistance

Urban Indian Health Organizations

(UIHOs) are independent, nonprofit, Indian-controlled organizations that contract with the Indian Health Service (IHS) to provide direct health care, referral/access services, inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment, and social service programs.

California is home to more American Indians than any other state in the country, including Urban Indian communities, and terminated, or non-federally recognized Tribes.



Today, there are 10 UIHOs in California, representing 1/3 of the total 34 UIHOs in the U.S.



1 in 9 American Indians in the U.S. lives in a California city.

California State Health Care System for AIANs

The state administers Medicaid programs, funded by the federal government, to ensure access to health-care services for AIAN individuals.



- Health services for American Indians are based on a special historical legal responsibility identified in treaties with the U.S. government.
- California voluntarily accepted this responsibility by adopting Public Law (P.L.) 83-280 in 1954, which allowed for State jurisdiction of Indian affairs.
- [DHCS: Indian Health Program \(IHP\)](#) mission is to improve the health status of American Indians living in urban, rural, and reservation or rancheria communities throughout California.

Table 1: American Indians in California

American Indians in CA that live in Urban Areas:	88%
American Indians in CA that live on Reservations:	3%
Federally Recognized Tribes in CA:	110
Non-Federally Recognized Tribes in CA:	50
CA State Tribes Petitioning for Federal Recognition:	75

The Right to Health Care

American Indians have a special Trust relationship with the U.S. government, receiving essential resources such as healthcare. Title V of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (1976) explicitly authorizes health services for Urban Indians.

Urban Indians are individuals of American Indian ancestry who have moved to cities either by choice seeking employment, education, and housing, or by force through the federal government's relocation policies starting in the 1940's. This has resulted in the vast majority of Urban Indians being unable to access their tribes for health services. Urban Indian Health Organizations are a key lifeline for the population.



Studies show that many American Indians fail to seek treatment at non-Indian facilities due to historical trauma, experienced prejudice, and misconceptions about American Indian health problems.

Urban Indian Health Status

Factors including economic, systemic, historical, and access to health care have all led to severe health disparities among the Urban Indian population. American Indians in urban areas suffer from chronic health conditions and health disparities that are vastly disproportionate to the health status of the general population.

Racial misclassification is a common occurrence on vital health statistics and census reports for American Indians in urban settings. These discrepancies lead to the ongoing underestimation of the population size and health status of Urban Indians in California.

Urban Indian Health Organizations (UIHOs)...

- Are uniquely positioned to identify health issues and diseases prevalent in the Urban Indian community.
- Offer culturally competent health, wellness, and prevention services.
- Are one-stop health centers that combine medical, dental, behavioral health and prevention with traditional healing practices. These factors result in American Indian patients seeking treatment earlier and more often than in non-Indian health facilities.

