



Tribal Leader
Town Hall on
COVID-19
March 17th, 2020
2 PM Eastern



Governmental Response to COVID-19

Tribal Leader Town Hall on COVID-19

Kevin J. Allis

NCAI CEO

March 17, 2020

Overview



- 1. Passage of H.R. 6074**
- 2. Declaration of National Emergency**
- 3. H.R. 6201 & Further Legislation**
- 4. NCAI's Role**

Passage of HR 6074



- The President signed H.R. 6074, an \$8.3 billion package to respond to COVID-19, on March 6, 2020.
- Includes at least \$40 million in direct set-aside funding for tribal nations, tribal organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs), to be distributed by CDC.
- Tribal organizations have requested that HHS authorize an inter-agency transfer of these funds from CDC to IHS for quick and efficient distribution.
- The HHS Secretary should increase the tribal set-aside of funds from \$40 million to \$120 million.

Declaration of National Emergency



- On March 13, 2020, the President declared a National Emergency in regards to COVID-19.
 - Opens up Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds at a 75% federal cost share.
 - Tribal Nations can request a waiver of their 25% cost share.
 - Allows HHS to release national stockpiles and waive certain Medicare, Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program requirements.
- FEMA has begun hosting regional calls with tribal nations to answer questions and will release a FAQ document.



Impending passage of HR 6201

- On March 14, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act passed the House of Representatives.
 - The bill includes \$64 million to be appropriated into the Indian Health Services Account, which can be used for Direct Service tribes, Self-governance tribes, and Urban Indian Organizations.
 - Additionally, H.R. 6201 includes coverage of testing for COVID-19 at no cost-sharing for American Indian and Alaska Natives regardless of where services have been authorized.
 - Lastly, \$10 million was set aside for Grants for Indian Programs within the Older Americans Act (OAA) for providing nutrition and other direct support services to American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian elders.

Subsequent Legislation



- As the urgency, infection rate, and death toll of the COVID-19 pandemic intensifies, it has become increasingly clear that Indian Country needs significantly more funding resources to protect and preserve human life.
- NCAI, alongside NAFOA, NIHB, NCUIH, USET, and other partners, has begun to draft specific funding needs and policy requests to ensure that Indian Country's concerns and priorities are comprehensively addressed in all future national legislative vehicles.



NCAI's Role as a Clearinghouse

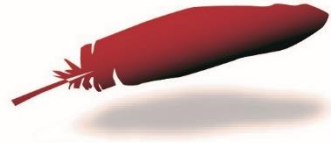
- There is nothing more important to Indian Country right now than addressing this unprecedented health crisis in a comprehensive, unified effort.
- NCAI will act as a clearinghouse to compile and create a comprehensive list of policy priorities.
- We will create a master listserv for individuals who are interested in developing policy and legislative solutions.
- This list will be divided into categories and assignments will be made to working groups.

Points of Contact



- Jacob Schellinger, Vice President of Government Relations
 - jschellinger@ncai.org
- Fatima Abbas, Director of Policy and Legislative Counsel
 - fabbas@ncai.org

National Indian Health Board



NIHB UPDATE

TRIBAL LEGISLATIVE HEALTH PRIORITIES FOR COVID-19 SUPPLEMENTAL

MARCH 17, 2020

Stacy A. Bohlen, Chief Executive Officer, NIHB
Shervin Aazami, Director of Congressional Relations, NIHB

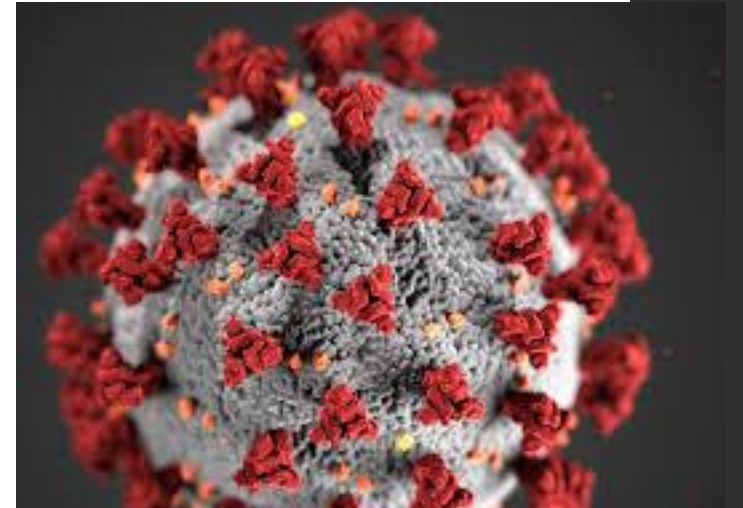
Who Are NIHB

Established by the Tribes to advocate as the united voice of federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, NIHB seeks to reinforce Tribal sovereignty, strengthen Tribal health systems, secure resources, and build capacity to achieve the highest level of health and well-being for our People.



PHASE 1 OF COVID-19 FUNDING: MARCH 5 - MARCH 7, 2020

- **H.R. 6074 – First Supplemental funding package for COVID-19 signed into law Friday, March 6**
 - \$8.3 billion package for medical and pharmaceutical research, relief for small businesses, and public health funding for states, Tribes, and urban Indian organizations
- **Includes \$40 million baseline set-aside for Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations through Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
 - Authorizes reimbursements for Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations that have expended funds for COVID-19 from January 20, 2020 up until legislation was signed into law (Friday March 6)
- Current mechanism of funding for Indian Country is via grants.
 - **NIHB is working to change that to ensure maximum flexibility for the Tribes**



PHASE 1 OF COVID-19 FUNDING: MARCH 5 – MARCH 7, 2020

• **NIHB March 7, 2020 letter to HHS Secretary Azar**

- On Thursday March 5, NIHB held All-Tribes call with over 200+ Tribal leaders to receive guidance on distribution of \$40 million set-aside funds

Five Tribal recommendations:

1. **Interagency transfer of \$40 million from CDC to IHS**
2. **Triple set aside to \$120 million for Tribes, Tribal organizations and urban Indian organizations**
3. **Minimize Commission Corps deployments from IHS/Tribes and deem all IHS Commission Corps officers as mission critical**
4. **Provide for reimbursements outside of simply clinical or preventive care**
5. **Clarify the process for how reimbursements authorized in statute will be delivered to Indian Country**



PHASE 2 OF COVID-19 FUNDING: MARCH 11 - MARCH 16, 2020

- **H.R. 6201 – Second COVID-19 Supplemental Package**
 - Includes billions in funding for free COVID-19 testing, nutrition and food assistance services, paid family leave, unemployment insurance, Indian Health Service, Medicaid, Veterans Health Administration

Health Provisions for Tribes:

- **\$64 million into Indian Health Service (IHS) Services Account for direct service Tribes and self-governance Tribes**
 - Money can be used across any line item in Services Account
- **Zero cost-sharing for COVID-19 tests for American Indians and Alaska Natives**
 - Requires the Secretary of HHS to cover the cost of COVID-19 tests for American Indians and Alaska Natives



PHASE 3 OF COVID-19 FUNDING: MARCH 16 - FUTURE

• **Movement on Third COVID-19 Supplemental Package**

- NIHB, NCAI, NAFOA, and others submitted letter to House/Senate appropriators on Sunday March 15, 2020
 - NIHB outlined Tribal health priorities not addressed in first or second COVID-19 packages

Priorities/Recommendations:

1. Provide \$200 million in funding for IHS Facilities Account

- Maximum flexibility for Tribes to increase hospital capacity, build auxiliary units, provide housing for providers, etc.

2. Provide \$1.1 billion in funding for IHS Services Account

- Maximum flexibility to Tribes to use money for Hospitals & Health Clinics, Community Health Representatives, Health Education, Public Health Nursing, etc.

3. Provide \$964 million for Purchased/Referred Care

- Ensure Tribes have funding available to purchase care outside the Indian health system

4. Authorize Medicaid Reimbursements for Qualified Indian Health Providers

- Initiate the process of “de-linking” Tribes from states for Medicaid services/reimbursement

5. Fix the “four walls” 3rd party reimbursement issue

- Maximize reimbursements to Tribes for services provided outside the “four walls” of a hospital/clinic



PHASE 3 OF COVID-19 FUNDING: MARCH 16 - FUTURE

NIHB also advocating for:

- **Authorizing direct access to Strategic National Stockpile for IHS, Tribes, Tribal organizations, and urban Indian organizations**
 - For medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, and other emergency resources
 - Senator Udall (D-NM) and Senator Warren (D-MA) introduced
- **Authorizing direct Tribal access to Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) funds**
 - Pushing to establish a baseline requirement of funding for all Tribes and Tribal consortiums
 - Senator Udall (D-NM) and Rep. Haaland (D-NM) introduced





The Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Indian Country

Dante Desiderio, Executive Director
Native American Finance Officers Association
March 17th, 2020



Growing Tribal Economies. Strengthening Tribal Finance.



Federal Economic & Fiscal Actions

- Federal Reserve cutting rates to ZERO
- Federal Reserve bond buying program – Liquidity
- Economic Relief & Possible Stimulus
 - \$850 Billion
 - First Discussion of industry specific relief
 - Airlines
 - “Other industries impacted”

Overview: Where we are now



- Indian Country will be hit disproportionately hard.
- Indian Country is trying to be proactive not reactive.
- Congress is working through relief packages:
 - 1st package: “Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act” Signed into law March 6. Designates at least \$40m to tribes and tribal organizations
 - 2nd package: “Families First Coronavirus Response Act” passed House March 14. Allocates \$64m to the Indian Health Service.
 - 3rd package: deliberations ongoing – currently prioritizing short-term needs over the next 180 days.
- **A strategy for economic recovery includes: credit relief, community support, and fiscal considerations.**



Tribal Strategy

- Credit Relief
- Community Program Support
- Fiscal Support

Credit Relief



- With a reliance on hospitality and natural resource development, Indian Country will be among the first to bear the brunt of tightening credit. It is essential to make credit available and more affordable. The following will help:
 - Indian Loan Guarantee Program: Increase loan fund amount from \$8.5M to \$2B
 - Indian Energy Loan Guarantee: Increase loan fund from \$2B to \$15B, remove administrative fees and burdens

Increased Community Support



- Consideration should be given to promoting community development to boost employment and lost program revenue.
 - Flexible Block Grant Housing Funds: Increase the spend in housing funds for community development efforts - \$200 MM
 - Food Services: Increase funding for Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations program - \$100 MM
 - Tribal Relief Fund - \$2 BB
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs: \$950 MM
 - Increase funding for Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA)
 - Increase funding to Aid to Tribal Governments program

Fiscal Considerations



- Subsistence Activities: Tribes that support unemployment for the citizens that live off of subsistence activities and have no federal unemployment support should be able to off-set those unemployment and workforce activities through a proportionate reduction in taxes currently paid by the tribal government.
- Tax-Exempt Debt: Tribes should be fully authorized to utilize lower cost tax exempt debt for the same purposes as states.
- Tax Credits: Authorize specific tribal allocations for New Market Tax Credits and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.
- Opportunity Zones: Tribes that are eligible for inclusion should be included in the program.

Next Steps



- Teamwork: We must present a unified front consisting of all of the Indian Country organizations throughout the crisis and aftermath. Our needs are great, we must work together.
- Communication: We can only effectively advocate for the needs of Indian Country if we know as soon as possible where the pain points are. Let us know what is happening at your tribe and what you need.
- Follow Legislative Trends:
 - Industry specific bailouts
 - Grants for business disruption

NAFOA

National Indian
Health Board



Questions and Answers
