

REN-19-034: Call to Congress to Enact Legislation Ensuring the Provision of Health Care to American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans Living in Urban Centers
Sponsor: National Council on Urban Indian Health

Summary:

- Section 405(c) of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA), requires the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reimburse Indian Health Services (IHS), tribal nations, and tribal organizations for services provided to beneficiaries eligible for services from either agency.
- Although VA and IHS have implemented an MOU for IHS and tribal providers, VA has made a discretionary decision to refuse to enter into agreements with Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs) that have Title V contracts with IHS.
- REN-19-034 urges Congress to pass legislation that amends IHCIA to insert UIOs after IHS and Tribal Organizations and require VA to reimburse for services provided to AI/AN veterans at all of the IHS, Tribal, and Urban (I/T/U) system, in order to protect the health and welfare of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) veterans living in urban centers.

Issue:

Title V of IHCIA authorizes federal funding for UIOs to provide health services to AI/ANs located in urban centers. Section 405(c) of the IHCIA, as amended and permanently enacted by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), requires the VA to reimburse IHS, tribal nations, and tribal organizations for services provided to beneficiaries eligible for services from either agency. Pursuant to IHCIA, IHS and VA entered into an MOU to promote better health care for AI/AN veterans; however, VA refused to include UIOs that have Title V contracts with IHS. Agreements with UIOs that provide care to AI/AN veterans would not only alleviate wait times at VA facilities but would also provide culturally competent care to the AI/ANs being served.

Currently, legislation has been introduced in both the House and the Senate (H.R. 4153 and S. 2365). H.R. 4153 has been referred to the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Energy and Commerce. S. 2365 was referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Action:

Resolution REN-19-034 urges Congress to pass legislation that amends IHCIA at 25 U.S.C. § 1645(c) to insert UIOs after IHS and Tribal Organizations and require VA to reimburse for services provided to AI/AN veterans at all of the I/T/U system facilities.

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Resolution Action Plan: REN-19-034

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Action Plan:

- 30 Days:
 - Staff will review pertinent legislation related to resolution subject area.
 - Contact resolution sponsor to coordinate requested assistance.
 - Assess opportunities for cross-coordination with other tribal nations, organizations, and representatives.
- 60 Days:
 - Write to appropriate committee leadership in support of H.R. 4153 and S. 2365.
 - Schedule Congressional and Administration visits to educate staff on the importance of H.R. 4153 and S. 2365.
- 90 Days:
 - Prepare activities update for NCAI Annual Convention.
- 120 Days:
 - Continue Hill visits and track discussions, hearings, and Hill activity pertaining to health care to American Indian and Alaska Native veterans living in urban centers.