

# Albuquerque Area Tribal Health Policy Newsletter



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The Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board is a nonprofit organization committed to supporting health & wellness in Native American communities. Our health policy and advocacy newsletter serves as a platform to share important health updates, success stories, and initiatives that impact the lives of community members. By subscribing, you will receive timely information on upcoming events, deadlines, and resources tailored to your unique needs and interests. Our goal is to empower Native American communities with the knowledge and support necessary to thrive.

## Important Dates

# MMIP AWARENESS DAY

## SAVE THE DATE



**Tuesday, May 5th, 2026**  
**10:00AM-6:00PM**  
**Indian Pueblo Cultural Center**  
*in Albuquerque, NM*

- Community honor walk
- Support for families
- Keynote speakers
- Resources
- And more...



### May 5, 2026

MMIP Awareness Day

**Indian Pueblo Cultural Center**  
**Albuquerque, NM**

[NM MMIP Webpage](#)

### May 5-6, 2026

IHS Direct Service Tribal Advisory  
Committee (**DSTAC**) Quarter 3 Meeting

**Rapid City, SD**

### May 5-7, 2026

2026 National Community Health Aide  
Program (**CHAP**) Symposium

### May 12, 2026

Medicare, Medicaid and Health Reform  
Policy Committee (**MMPC**)

Billings, MT

Virtual

[CHAP Registration](#)

**May 13, 2026**

Center for Medicaid & Medicare Services  
Tribal Technical Advisory Group (**CMS  
TTAG**)

Virtual

[CMS TTAG Meeting Link](#)

**June 2, 2026**

Tribal Leaders Diabetes Committee  
(**TLDC**)

Virtual

[TLDC Meeting Link](#)

**June 14-17, 2026**

National Congress of American Indians  
(**NCAI**) 2026 Mid Year Convention &  
Marketplace

Memphis, TN

[NCAI Mid Year Registration](#)

**June 18, 2026**

National Tribal Advisory Committee  
(**NTAC**) on Behavioral Health Quarter 2  
Meeting

Virtual

## Federal Administrative & Legislative Updates



### **NCAI and NARF Joint Statement: SCOTUS Ruling Guts Voter Protections | NCAI**

April 29, 2026 - "Today's decision cruelly undercuts the Voting Rights Act, the foundational tool for Native voters and other voters of color to protect themselves from racial discrimination when voting, including in redistricting."

[Read More](#)

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## Indian Health Service Announces New Round of Water Infrastructure Funding

The Indian Health Service (IHS) announced on Tuesday it will allocate \$700 million in fiscal year 2026 funding to support drinking water and sanitation projects across Indian Country, marking a major step in addressing long-standing infrastructure gaps in Tribal communities. The funding comes through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which provides a total of [...]

[Read More](#)

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## Downing Introduces Native American Housing and Self-Determination Modernization Act - [H.R. 8092](#)

"This legislation modernizes and reauthorizes NAHASDA, including the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) program, through 2032 to better assist the housing needs of Indian Country by providing targeted regulatory relief.

The primary law governing federal support for housing in Indian Country, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (NAHASDA), has not been updated since 2008. Although Congress continues funding, its programs have not been authorized since 2013."

[Read More](#)

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# Addressing the Government Accountability Office (GAO) High-Risk Designation of the Indian Health Service

## [Released December 2025 - IHS Action Plan: Version I](#) [Released April 2026 - IHS Action Plan: Version II](#)

In the December 2025 Version 1 IHS Action Plan, Fiscal Year 2026, Quarter 1 roadmap was to:

- Complete Phase 1 Action Plan to Address Inadequate Oversight of Facilities and Programs in Response to IHS' Designation on GAO's High-Risk List.
- Executive Leadership Team established the IHS Action Plan Core Team for Removal from the GAO High-Risk List.
- Publish Phase 1 Action Plan and share IHS path forward with Tribal Partners.

Fiscal year 2026, Quarter 2 roadmap:

- Develop Phase 2 Action Plan to Address Inadequate Oversight of Facilities and Programs in Response to IHS' Designation on GAO's High-Risk List with actions, timelines, and measures.
- Executive Leadership Team approval of Phase 2 Action Plan.
- Submit to GAO the Phase 2 Action Plan to Address Inadequate Oversight of Facilities and Programs in Response to IHS' Designation on GAO's High-Risk List.

From NIHB:

"On April 16, 2026, the Indian Health Service released its Phase II Action Plan, which provides an update on the agency's efforts to address the GAO high-risk designation and associated activities. The Phase II plan summarizes actions completed to date, those underway, and planned next steps, and how they correspond to the conditions of the GAO designation and its processes."

To understand the GAO high-risk designation of the IHS, consider the following points:

- The Government Accountability Office identifies high-risk areas to focus on improving government operations.
- The Indian Health Service has been designated high-risk due to persistent management and operational challenges.
- Key issues include inadequate funding, staffing shortages, and outdated infrastructure.
- The IHS struggles with health disparities among Native American populations, impacting service delivery.
- GAO recommends enhanced oversight and accountability measures to address these challenges.
- Ongoing monitoring and reform efforts are essential to improve the effectiveness of the IHS.

## Colorado State Updates

Colorado Community Highlight:

# Amy Barcenas, Yellowtail Lactation Consultants

## Who is Yellowtail Lactation Consultants?

"My name is Amy Barcenas, the founder and owner of Yellowtail Lactation Consultants, LLC. I am Chippewa Cree from the Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation in Northcentral Montana. I am a new co-chair for the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs Health & Wellness Board, a Community Health Worker, Full-Spectrum Doula, and a Lactation Counselor. Yellowtail was established to address the critical gaps in culturally responsive lactation and doula care for Indigenous and underserved communities in Colorado. Our work is driven by the belief that birth work is sacred, that breastfeeding is medicine, and that our communities deserve care from people who understand their lived experiences."

## How does this work have an impact on Maternal Health?

"Yellowtail Lactation Consultants directly impacts maternal health by addressing the root causes of health disparities in Indigenous communities. Breastfeeding support is maternal health. It reduces postpartum hemorrhage risk, supports maternal mental health, and strengthens the bonding and recovery process after birth. When Indigenous families receive care from providers who share their cultural background and lived experience, outcomes improve significantly."

## Big News!

Yellowtail Lactation Consultants will be hosting an Indigenous Lactation Counselor (ILC) training in Denver, CO. The ILC credential is a valuable, culturally grounded certification designed specifically to support Native birthing communities and it also serves as a direct pathway toward becoming a full International Board Certified Lactation Consultant.

This training is building a Native workforce of skilled, certified lactation professionals who want to serve our communities. The training is for:

- Native women looking to enter the lactation and perinatal care field.
- Those already working in birthwork and looking for the next credential.

[Email Yellowtail for More Information](#)

## Understanding the Impact of H.R. 1 and Federal Changes to Medicaid

"On July 4, 2025 the House Reconciliation bill "H.R. 1". One Big Beautiful Bill Act," was signed into law. This page provides information on the federally mandated changes to Health First Colorado, Colorado's Medicaid program, and the Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+). Together, these programs cover 1.3 million Coloradans or about 20% of the state's population." ~ CO Dept. of HCPF

Thank you to Colorado's Department of Health Care Policy & Financing in providing this information. The webpage can be found at the link below.

The webpage provides:

- Impact Snapshot;
- Coverage and Eligibility Provisions;
- Providers, Fees, Payments, and Tax Provisions;
- Rural Health Transformation;
- Resources;
- and a way to Stay Informed and Engaged.

[H.R. 1 Colorado Webpage](#)

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## Denver Indian Health and Family Services Community Events Calendar

<https://www.dihfs.org/community-calendar>

Whether you are in Denver or visiting, the DIHFS community calendar provides you and your family cultural events for the month of May.

## New Mexico State Updates

The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department has published the 2026 events calendar. The calendar provides important state deadlines and important dates for Indian Country. Click the link below to download and print your copy.

[2026 NM Indian Affairs Department Calendar](#)

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## New Mexico Senate Bill 3 (SB3) - Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act (BHRIA)

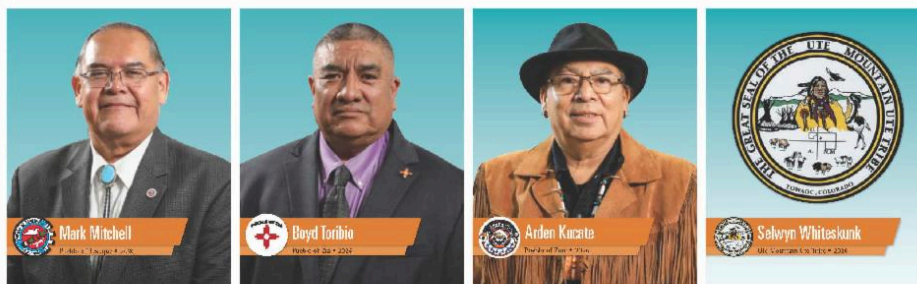
The January SB3 Monthly Report has just been shared. It highlights recent progress and upcoming region workshops.

The link below has been provided for you to review the past and upcoming Executive Committee Meetings, Monthly Reports, and who to contact for each BH Region.

[SB3 Monthly Reports & Updates](#)

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# NEW MEXICO'S NATIVE LEADERSHIP 2026



**New Mexico's Tribal Directory!**

[New Mexico's Native Leadership 2026 Website.](#)

Thank you to New Mexico's Indian Affairs Department for providing a 2026 Leadership page. New Mexico is home to approximately 263,615 Native American citizens (12.4% of the population) based on the 2020 census data.

"Each Tribe is a sovereign nation with its own government, lifeways, traditions and culture; and each tribe has a unique relationship with the federal and state governments.

The Nations, Pueblos and Tribes (NPTs) in New Mexico are actively engaged to preserving their Indigenous languages, religion, culture, the environment and in promoting quality education and health care for all members, especially their youth and elders."

The link is provided up above to view the 2026 Tribal Leaders and Contact List.

## Tribal Consultations, Listening Sessions, & Written Comments

### Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) - Dear Tribal Leader Letter

DEA first published a notice of proposed rulemaking in January 2025, proposing a registration system that would allow telemedicine providers to prescribe controlled substances without an in-person appointment. DEA held virtual Tribal consultations on April 22 and 23.

Due to a low Tribal attendance, DEA is seeking written comments from Tribal Leaders. DEA released a framing paper for the Consultation, which contains 21 questions for which the agency seeks tribal [input found here](#).

**Submission Date: Friday, May 8, 2026**

**Email: [OTJ@usdoj.gov](mailto:OTJ@usdoj.gov)**

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### [Dear Tribal Leader Letter](#)

### United States Department of the Interior Tribal Interior Budget Council

The Tribal Interior Budget Council (TIBC) plays a critical role in ensuring that Tribal priorities inform the budget formulation process.

Indian Affairs invites you to the Main Interior Building in Washington, DC on:

**May 19-20, 2026** to participate in a focused TIBC session. One day will be designated to discuss relevant budget, strategy, and planning of the FY2028 budget and one day will be designated to discuss the future of TIBC.

The NCAI Budget Task Force will be hosting a pre-caucus meeting in preparation for the upcoming DOI consultation focused on the Tribal Interior Budget Council.

## **Indian Gaming Association Headquarters**

**Monday, May 18, 2026 at 1:00pm ET**

Why does it matter?

- The Tribal Interior Budget Council advises on budget priorities for tribal programs
- it focuses on funding allocations for various Indian Affairs programs.
- TIBC discussion may include funding related to Section 105(I) contracts under ISDEAA.

[NCAI Registration](#)

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## **Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families Notice of Tribal Consultation Meeting**

[Federal Register Notice Here](#)

**Date: Thursday, June 18, 2026, 8:30am - 11:00am PT**

**Where: Hilton Orange County/Costa Mesa, 3050 Bristol Street,  
Costa Mesa, CA**

The agenda for the scheduled OHS Tribal Consultation reflects the statutory purposes of Head Start Tribal Consultations related to meeting the needs of AIAN children and families. OHS will also highlight the progress made in addressing issues and concerns raised in the previous OHS Tribal Consultations.

Within 45 days of the consultation session, a detailed report of the consultation session will be available for all tribal governments receiving funds for Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Tribes can submit written testimony for the report to the OHS at [AIANHeadStart@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:AIANHeadStart@acf.hhs.gov) prior to the consultation session or **within 30 days** (July 17, 2026) of each meeting. OHS will summarize oral testimony and comments from the consultation session in the report, along with topics of concern and recommendations.

## **Announcements**

Stay Tuned for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board's (AAIHB) Celebration date coming soon.

It will be your opportunity to stop by and meet and greet AAIHB's staff and programs.

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AAIHB would love to highlight the work You and Your Tribes are doing!  
Stories will focus on Tribal Health Policy or Call-to-Health Action.

[Email AAIHB Health Policy Team Here](#)

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