

ANHB UPDATE



July 31, 2026

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STATE UPDATES



Rural Health Transformation Program Updates

The Alaska Department of Health (DOH) has shared updates regarding the timing of funding decisions for the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) First Year Funding Cycle. DOH has identified the need for additional clarification and information from many applicants and expects the review process to continue by at least two weeks beyond the anticipated August 1 award date. During that time, applicants may receive a message from RHTP@alaska.gov requesting clarifying information or revised materials. The sooner applicants respond to these requests, the sooner applications will continue through the process. For applicants who must submit a Waiver of Sovereign Immunity (WOSI), award announcements cannot be made until the WOSI is received because the application is considered "incomplete." Thus, there is a benefit to submitting the WOSI sooner rather than later. ANHB will meet with DOH during the Mega Meeting next week and continue engagement on RHTP through the monthly Tribal-State RHTP Workgroup.

Survey on Medicaid Eligibility and Redetermination

The Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee (TSGAC) is circulating a survey regarding current issues and barriers with Medicaid eligibility and redetermination, in relation to H.R. 1-related Medicaid changes. Responses will be shared with the CMS Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG), which provides direct feedback to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS is expected to issue Tribal-specific guidance on the new requirements soon, to assist States in implementing the Tribal exemptions in an effective way. [Share your feedback here.](#)

DOH Releases Updated Medicaid Tribal Billing Manual

The Alaska Department of Health (DOH) has released an [updated version of the Medicaid Tribal Billing Manual](#). While the new manual is a revision to previous versions, there are no changes to the program; coverage and enrollment requirements remain the same. DOH welcomes provider feedback on the new manual. Providers should send comments to doh.hcs.operations.info@alaska.gov, with the subject line "Tribal Billing Manual Comments," by September 15, 2026. Feedback will be considered for the next annual review in October.

SAMHSA CCBHC Funding Opportunities

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released new Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs). Alaska was recently selected to participate in the CCBHC Medicaid Demonstration. The Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) encourages

2026 Meeting Dates

August 4-6, 2026

ANHB Mega Meeting Anchorage, AK

August 10, 2026

RHTP Regional Planning Meeting Ketchikan, AK

August 12, 2026

Tribal Behavioral Health Directors Quarterly Meeting Virtual

August 13, 2026

FY 2028-FY 2029 NTBFW Planning and Evaluation Meeting Washington, DC, and Virtual

August 16-21, 2026

NIHB National Tribal Health Conference Chandler, AZ

August 19-21, 2026

ANTHC Board of Directors Meeting Anchorage, AK

August 31, 2026

IHS National Tribal Advisory Committee (NTAC) on Behavioral Health

September 9-10, 2026

CDC/ATSDR Tribal Advisory Committee Tucson, AZ

September 22, 2026

RHTP Regional Planning Meeting Anchorage, AK

behavioral health providers exploring implementation or expansion of the CCBHC model to review the following opportunities:

- **CCBHC-PDI:** [Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic \(CCBHC\): Planning, Development, and Implementation Grant](#)
- **CCBHC-IA:** [Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Improvement and Advancement](#)

Applications are due to SAMHSA on August 17, 2026. For questions or support related to CCBHC readiness or implementation, please contact DBH's CCBHC Project Director at Anastasia.larion@alaska.gov.

FEDERAL UPDATES



Template Comment Letter: CMS Interim Final Rule on H.R. 1 Community Engagement Requirements

ANHB has distributed a [template comment letter](#) in response to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) [Interim Final Rule](#) on implementation of H.R. 1 community engagement requirements. This template was developed using feedback from the Tribal H.R. 1 Workgroup. We encourage THOs to submit comments. The deadline is **today, Friday, July 31st**, at 11:59 PM Eastern Time / 7:59 PM Alaska Time. Comments can be [submitted here](#).

Senate Votes to Advance Nomination of Mark Cruz as IHS Director

On July 30, the Senate voted to advance the nomination of Mark Cruz to serve as Director of the Indian Health Service (IHS). The Senate is expected to act on his confirmation as early as next week. The full Senate vote follows a favorable vote by the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, chaired by Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski. ANHB submitted a [letter of support](#) for Mr. Cruz's nomination and applauds its advancement.

House Passes Continuing Resolution to Extend Government Funding

Last week, the House of Representatives passed the [Continuing Appropriations Act, 2027](#), a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) that would extend government funding from September 30, 2026, until December 4, 2026. The CR was passed in an effort to proactively avoid a government shutdown. It includes an additional \$75.77 million for Indian Health Services and \$8.29 million for Indian Health Facilities to cover the costs of staffing and operations at facilities opened, renovated, or expanded in 2022, 2026, and 2027. The CR has been sent over to the Senate, which is in session through the first week of August before its scheduled recess.

Native Children's Commission Implementation Act Introduced in Senate

September 22-24, 2026

HHS STAC Meeting
San Diego, CA

October 29, 2026

Medicaid Task
Force
Anchorage, AK

November 2, 2026

IHS National Tribal
Advisory Committee
(NTAC) on
Behavioral Health
Virtual

November 18-20, 2026

ANTHC Board of
Directors Meeting
Anchorage, AK

December 2, 2026

ANTHC Annual
Meeting
Anchorage, AK

December 8-9, 2026

HHS STAC Meeting
Washington, DC

December 8-10, 2026

ANHB Annual
Meeting & IHS
Budget Formulation
Anchorage, AK

2027 Meeting Dates

March 23-24, 2027

ATHC Pre-
Negotiations
Anchorage, AK

May 10-14, 2027

ATHC Final
Negotiations
Anchorage, AK

On July 14, Senators Murkowski and Schatz introduced the Native Children's Commission Implementation Act ([S. 4976](#)), a bill that aims to comprehensively address the difficulties facing Native children, mothers, families, and communities. The legislation would implement many of the recommendations from the 2024 Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboloff Commission on Native Children Report. It would statutorily mandate a number of federal Tribal Advisory Committees. The bill has been referred for consideration by the Senate Committee of Indian Affairs, and ANHB will continue tracking its journey through the legislative process.

IHS Initiates Tribal Consultation on FY 2026 SDPI Increase

In a July 13, 2026, Dear Tribal Leader Letter, the Indian Health Service (IHS) initiated Tribal Consultation and Urban Confer on the use of approximately \$70 million in Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) funding, including \$50 million associated with the fiscal year 2026 SDPI funding increase and \$20 million in one-time unobligated SDPI funding. IHS seeks written comments in response to a series of questions regarding use of the funding and the future direction of SDPI. [View the Dear Tribal Leader Letter](#) for more details and instructions on how to submit comments.

CMS Rescinds "Fast Track" Federal Review Process for Section 1115 Demonstration Extensions

On July 7, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) [rescinded](#) previous, 2015 guidance establishing an expedited review process for certain Section 1115 Medicaid and CHIP demonstration extensions. The change follows new statutory requirements that require the CMS Chief Actuary to certify the budget neutrality of all Section 1115 demonstrations. As a result, waiver extensions that previously qualified for expedited review will now undergo the standard federal review process. CMS states that the current fast-track extension process could make it difficult for CMS to evaluate 1115 renewal applications consistent with the new budget neutrality requirements.

HHS Announces New Funding to Address Mental Illness, Addiction, Homelessness

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. recently announced over \$700 million in funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The funding includes a \$96 million opportunity for the Safety Through Recovery, Engagement, and Evidence-based Treatment and Support (STREETS) program, along with \$612 million in funding opportunities for additional behavioral health programs. [View the SAMHSA announcement](#) for more information.

OTHER UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS



ANHB encourages participation in its workgroups. Please see below a list of current ANHB workgroups. If you would like yourself or someone from your team added to any of these workgroups, please let us know by emailing anhb@anhb.org. If you have questions about workgroup focus or time commitment, please reach out to us as well.

- **Medicaid Task Force (MTF):** Convenes in May and October with the Alaska Department of Health (DOH) to address Medicaid issues and the Medicaid Open Items list.
- **Medicaid Eligibility Workgroup:** Monthly workgroup with the Alaska Department of Health to address the Medicaid application backlog, Division of Public Assistance (DPA) modernization, and related areas of concern.
- **Medicaid Travel Policy Workgroup:** Quarterly or ad-hoc workgroup with the Alaska Department of Health focused on Medicaid travel issues at the policy level.
- **Tribal CFO Workgroup:** Monthly or quarterly workgroup of Tribal CFOs and policy analysts regarding common issues including Appendix A.
- **Legislative Committee:** Develops ANHB's State and Federal policy priorities annually in fall and winter. Meets weekly during State Legislative Session to formulate ANHB advocacy strategies and build consensus on state and federal engagement.
- **Rural Health Transformation Program Workgroup:** Ad-hoc Tribal workgroup focused on shared concerns around the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP).
- **Village Built Clinic Workgroup:** Ad-hoc workgroup with the Indian Health Service (IHS) on funding for Village Built Clinics (VBCs).
- **HR 1 Workgroup:** Bi-weekly workgroup to share knowledge and build consensus around Tribal priorities related to the implementation of H.R. 1 and engage with the Alaska Department of Health.
- **Traditional Healing Workgroup:** Joint workgroup with the Alaska Department of Health on amendment of Alaska's 1115 waiver to allow for Traditional Healing services.

The Voice of Alaska Tribal Health Since 1968

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