

ANHB UPDATE



August 14, 2026

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STATE UPDATES



DOH Announces First Rural Health Transformation Program Awards

On Friday, August 7, and Friday, August 14, the Alaska Department of Health (DOH) released award announcements for the first projects selected to receive Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) funding. A list of the projects is available [here](#). DOH has indicated there will be a series of funding announcements, with additional notices to be announced each Friday as they are finalized, rather than waiting until the entire review process is complete.

Congratulations to ANHB members Chugachmiut, Maniilaq Association, Norton Sound Health Corporation, Southcentral Foundation, and Tanana Chiefs Conference on their RHTP funding awards. ANHB analysis on year one outcomes is forthcoming as more awards are announced. Consider joining ANHB's RHTP workgroup if you are interested in this topic.

RHTP Advisory Council: Upcoming Meeting Notice

The Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) Advisory Council to the Alaska Department of Health will meet on Monday, August 17, from 9:00 – 11:00 AM. The meeting is open to the public, and a recording will be posted to the Department of Health's [RHTP Advisory Council webpage](#) for those who cannot attend. Register for the meeting [here](#).

HCS Announces Upcoming Change to Medicaid Travel Broker

The Alaska Department of Health, Division of Health Care Services (HCS) has announced that it plans to transition its Medicaid travel broker contract. The new contractor will be Travel Services, Inc, which will oversee Medicaid air and ferry transportation. This change will go into effect on October 16, 2026. HCS will be putting out more information in the coming months through the [HCS Connect email list](#).

DBH Invites Public Comment on Mental Health and Substance Use Block Grant

The Alaska Department of Health, Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) invites review and public comments on Alaska's FY 2027 Combined Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) and Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services (SUPTRS) Block Grant application to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The application outlines Alaska's grant-funded goals, priorities, and strategies for addressing the behavioral health needs of Alaskans through mental health and substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and recovery services. DBH notes that revisions to the application will continue throughout the public comment period as sections are finalized with updated information and stakeholder input. Written public comments and questions may be submitted via email to

2026 Meeting Dates

August 16-21, 2026

NIHB National Tribal Health Conference
Chandler, AZ

August 17, 2026

RHTP Advisory Council Meeting
Virtual

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

September 22-24, 2026

HHS STAC Meeting
San Diego, CA

October 29, 2026

Medicaid Task Force
Anchorage, AK

November 2, 2026

doh.dbh.public.comments@alaska.gov using the subject line "MHBG/SUPTRS Public Comment" through Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 5:00 PM AKDT. To access the most current version of the application, use the following instructions:

1. Access the WebBGAS platform using the link:
<https://bgas.samhsa.gov/Module/BGAS/Users>
2. Use the following credentials to log in:
 - Username: citizenak
 - Password: citizen
3. Select **View an Existing Application**
4. Click on the link for the **2027 Combined MHBG/SUPTRS BG Application/Behavioral Health Assessment and Plan**.
5. Select the **View Application** button to review progress and content of each section of the application.

ANTHC Water and Wellness Updates

At the ANHB Mega Meeting last week, we were joined by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) for updates on their recent work. ANTHC shared [this link](#) for ANHB members to learn more about their water and wellness work across the state. See the Indian Health Service (IHS) dashboard at the bottom of the webpage, which has the option to search by project.

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 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.Iarion@alaska.gov.

FEDERAL UPDATES



Senate Confirms Mark Cruz as IHS Director

On Friday, August 7, the Senate confirmed Mr. Mark Cruz as Director of the Indian Health Service. Mr. Cruz will continue in his role as Senior Advisor to Secretary Kennedy while assuming the role of IHS Director. Mr. Cruz is a citizen of the Klamath Tribes and brings extensive experience in Tribal and federal policy. Before his current role at HHS, he previously served at the U.S. Department of the Interior during the Trump administration as Deputy Assistant Secretary–Indian Affairs for

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

Policy and Economic Development (DAS-PED), and he also has experience on Capitol Hill. ANHB looks forward to working in partnership with Mr. Cruz to advance priorities that will strengthen Tribal health care in Alaska.

Senate Passes Continuing Resolution to Extend Government Funding

Before the Senate left D.C. for its August recess, it passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) that would fund federal agencies through December 11, 2026 at current levels. The CR would additionally restrict the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) from implementing its proposed rule changing the federal grantmaking process until after December 11. The House passed its own CR before leaving for its respective recess, without the OMB provision. Upon their return, the House and Senate will need to negotiate a final bill by October 1 to avoid a government shutdown.

TSGAC Meets in Washington, D.C.

The Indian Health Service (IHS) Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee (TSGAC) recently convened on July 28-29 in Washington, D.C. The TSGAC met with IHS leadership, including Chief of Staff Clayton Fulton, for updates and discussion. The committee also heard updates from the Office of Self-Determination and Self-Governance (OSD), as well as updates on IHS' Health IT Modernization; the federal appropriations process; the Office of Environmental Health and Engineering (OEHE); the Affordable Care Act (ACA)/Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) project's activities; and from Tribal Self-Governance (TSG). ANHB monitors TSGAC meetings and provides assistance as needed to Alaska's representatives.

Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs to Host Consultations on Section 105(l) Facility Leasing

The Department of the Interior, Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA), in collaboration with the Office of Facilities, Property and Safety Management (OFPSM) and the Office of Tribal Leases (OTL), will host two virtual Consultation Sessions regarding recent proposed updates to the 105(l) facility lease process. The sessions are scheduled for September 8 at 1:00 PM Eastern Time and September 10 at 2:00 PM Eastern Time. More information can be found in the [Dear Tribal Leader Letter](#) issued by the AS-IA.

IHS Announces \$15.3 Million Investment in Staff Quarters Projects

The Indian Health Service (IHS) has announced that it will dedicate \$15.3 million in funding, through the Healthcare Facilities Construction Funds Quarters Program, to eight staff quarters projects to support the health care workforce and facilities in Indian Country. IHS previously conducted a request for project proposals in January and received 22 applications from six IHS Areas. The top eight were then selected based on their clear and demonstrated housing needs, remoteness, cost, readiness for implementation, and the ability to support essential staffing. The projects selected for funding include one from the

Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC). [See more details here.](#)

HRSA Publishes Revised Plan for 340B Rebate Model Pilot Program

On August 3, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) published a [revised 340B Rebate Model Pilot Program via the Federal Register](#). Under the proposal, participating manufacturers would provide rebates to covered entities after the purchase of certain eligible drugs, rather than offering the discounted price at the point of sale. HRSA originally announced a 340B Rebate Model Pilot Program in July 2025, but withdrew the proposal after it was challenged in federal court. In February 2026, the agency issued a Request for Information seeking stakeholder feedback on the potential use of rebates to effectuate 340B ceiling prices. The Tribal Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) [submitted comments](#) urging HRSA to exempt Indian Health Providers from any rebate any rebate model due to the unique federal trust responsibility and operational impacts on Tribal health programs – a position that ANHB supports. The revised pilot retains the core structure of the 2025 proposal while adding some operational safeguards and reporting requirements. ANHB will continue to monitor this proposal.

Native Children’s Commission Implementation Act Introduced in Senate

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.

OTHER UDPATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS



ANHB Workgroups

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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