

ANHB UPDATE



September 11, 2026

Inside this issue:

State Updates

- RHTP Updates: Award Announcements and Upcoming Webinar
- Notice of Tribal Consultation: Non-Citizen SPA
- Notice of Proposed Changes: Behavioral Health 1115 Waiver Services Rates for Subacute Stabilization and Residential Services
- DPA Provides Demo on New Application for Benefits to Tribal Assistants
- HCS Announces Upcoming Change to Medicaid Travel Broker
- DOH and ANTHC Release Revised Healthy Alaskans 2030 State Health Assessment

Federal Updates

- Congress Passes Continuing Resolution Extending Government Funding to December 11, 2026
- HRSA Announces Tribal Consultation on 340B Drug Pricing Program Rebate Model Pilot
- VA Schedules Alaska ITU Reimbursement Agreement Training and Utilization
- CSC Workgroup Meets in Washington, D.C.
- Mark Cruz Takes Office as 12th IHS Director
- IHS September 9, 2026 Dear Tribal Leader Letter
- IHS August 25, 2026 Dear Tribal Leader Letter
- IHS Announces \$15.3 Million Investment in Staff Quarters Projects

Other Updates & Announcements

- BBAHC President/CEO Robert J. Clark Announces Retirement
- ANTHC Announces Transfer of Ownership of ANMC
- Southcentral Foundation to Partner in Hosting Listening Sessions on AI/AN Elder Medicare Benefits Enrollment
- ANHB Approves Resolutions on Self-Governance Expansion and Sovereign Immunity
- ANTHC Hiring Behavioral Health Wellness Clinic Director
- ANHB Workgroups
- Upcoming Events

STATE UPDATES



RHTP Updates: Award Announcements and Upcoming Webinar

Yesterday, the Alaska Department of Health (DOH) provided notice that **no additional award announcements are expected this week**. The remaining announcements are anticipated over the coming weeks as final review and award processing are completed. Concurrently, DOH is moving forward with preparations for the Year 2 funding cycle.

DOH will host a webinar **this afternoon**, Friday, September 11, from 2:00 – 3:00 PM, focused on reflections from the Year 1 funding cycle and an overview of the approach for the upcoming Year 2 funding cycle. [Register here](#).

To date, DOH has issued Notices of Intent to Award for a total of \$207 million in RHTP Year One funding. Approximately 27% of this funding has been awarded to ANHB members. ANHB will continue to analyze Year One funding as award announcements are made. A list of all projects awarded funding is available [here](#).

Notice of Tribal Consultation: Non-Citizen SPA

The Alaska Department of Health (DOH) has [announced a Tribal Consultation opportunity](#) on a proposed State Plan Amendment (SPA) regarding changes to non-citizen Medicaid eligibility. These changes are in accordance with Section 71109 of the Working Families Tax Cut Act (WFTCA). If you would like ANHB to request a virtual “in-person” Tribal Consultation on this proposed SPA, please let us know by September 16, 2026. Written comments regarding the proposed amendment are due no later than the close of business on October 1st, 2026, to Christal Hays, Alaska Department of Health, 3601 C Street, Suite 902, Anchorage, AK 99503, or christal.hays@alaska.gov.

Notice of Proposed Changes: Behavioral Health 1115 Waiver Services Rates for Subacute Stabilization and Residential Services

The Alaska Department of Health (DOH) has released a Notice of Proposed Changes regarding regulatory revisions to Medicaid behavioral health 1115 waiver services rates for subacute stabilization and residential services. The regulatory changes are out for public comment with a deadline of October 21, 2026 for written comments. [View the public notice for more details](#).

DPA Provides Demo on New Application for Benefits to Tribal Assisters

On August 17, the Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Assistance (DPA) provided a walk-through of its new application for

2026 Meeting Dates

September 15, 2026

ANHB CFO
Workgroup
Virtual

September 15, 2026

IHS TLDC Quarterly
Meeting
Virtual

September 16, 2026

HRSA Tribal
Consultation on 340B
Drug Pricing Program
Rebate Model Pilot
Virtual

September 22, 2026

RHTP Regional
Planning Meeting
Anchorage, AK

September 22-24, 2026

HHS STAC Meeting
San Diego, CA

September 23, 2026

ANHB Eligibility
Workgroup
Virtual

September 28, 2026

ANHB Traditional
Healing Workgroup
Virtual

October 7, 2026

VA Alaska ITU
Reimbursement
Agreement Training
and Utilization
Virtual

October 18-22, 2026

NCAI Annual
Convention
Palm Springs, CA

October 27, 2026

benefits – including Medicaid, SNAP, and other public assistance programs – to Tribal health staff who assist patients with their applications. The new application is a single, mobile-friendly form that Alaskans can use to apply for multiple benefits at once. The form is available through the [Alaska Connect Portal](#). ANHB continues to engage with DOH to ensure that the modernized form will mesh with Tribal assisters' ability to help patients with their applications.

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](#).

DOH and ANTHC Release Revised Healthy Alaskans 2030 State Health Assessment

On August 21, the Alaska Department of Health (DOH) and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) announced the release of the [revised Healthy Alaskans 2030 State Health Assessment](#), a collaborative effort that identifies Alaska's most pressing health needs for the decade 2020-2030. The assessment serves as the foundation for the [2030 State Health Improvement Plan](#), which tracks progress toward meeting those needs. The 2026 update includes some bad news, especially relating to obesity, childhood vaccination rates, and life expectancy. There is also some good news, including increased access to prenatal care, higher high school graduation rates, and decreased exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke. Alaska's state health improvement plan is the only one in the country led by a state-Tribal partnership.

FEDERAL UPDATES



Congress Passes Continuing Resolution Extending Government Funding to December 11, 2026

On September 1, the House of Representatives passed a short-term [continuing resolution](#) (CR) to extend federal government funding to December 11, 2026. The Senate previously passed the CR in early August by a wide margin before sending it to the House. The President signed the CR into law on September 2. In addition to continuing funding for government programs, the CR contains a provision delaying implementation of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) [proposed rule](#) to revise 2 C.F.R. Part 200's Uniform Guidance, which would affect changes to the federal grantmaking process and has seen broad push-back.

RHTP Regional
Planning Meeting
Utqiagvik, AK

October 27-28, 2026

IHS CSC Advisory
Workgroup
Sacramento, CA

October 29, 2026

Medicaid Task Force
Anchorage, AK

November 2, 2026

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

November 17, 2026

RHTP Regional
Planning Meeting
Juneau, AK

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

February 9-11, 2026

ANHB Mega Meeting
Juneau, AK

March 23-24, 2027

HRSA Announces Tribal Consultation on 340B Drug Pricing Program Rebate Model Pilot

In an [August 28, 2026 Dear Tribal Leader Letter \(DTLL\)](#), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced an upcoming Tribal Consultation on the proposed 340B drug pricing program rebate model pilot. The Tribal Consultation will take place on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, from 3:00 – 5:00 PM Eastern Time (11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Alaska Time), via Zoom. [Register for the virtual consultation here](#). For those unable to participate in the consultation, HRSA will accept written testimony and comments at tribalconsultation@hrsa.gov through October 1, 2026.

On August 3, 2026, HRSA published a [revised 340B Rebate Model Pilot Program via the Federal Register](#). HRSA originally announced a 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 model due to the unique federal trust responsibility and operational impacts on Tribal health programs. The revised pilot retains the core structure of the 2025 proposal while adding some operational safeguards and reporting requirements.

VA Schedules Alaska ITU Reimbursement Agreement Training and Utilization

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ITU Reimbursement Agreement Program Office along with the Alaska VA Health Care System (VAHCS) and Western Region Payment Operations will be providing a training session to Alaska Tribal health program staff that provide healthcare services to eligible Veterans. The office also intends to gather feedback on the agreement utilization, challenges, and issues. This meeting will take place on **October 7, 2026**, from 9:00 to 11:30 AM [over Microsoft Teams](#).

CSC Advisory Workgroup Meets in Washington, D.C.

The Indian Health Service (IHS) Contract Support Cost Advisory Group (CSCAG) met last week in Washington, D.C., to discuss changes to the CSC guidance for Tribal and IHS personnel, located in Chapter 3, Part 6 of the Indian Health Manual. The discussion and review of proposed changes will continue at the next workgroup meeting, on October 27-28, 2026, in Sacramento, CA. An update on last week's meeting will be provided at the upcoming ANHB CFO Workgroup on September 15.

Mark Cruz Takes Office as 12th IHS Director

On Friday, August 21, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced Mr. Mark Cruz' formal assumption of office as Indian Health Service (IHS) Director. Director Cruz was

ATHC Pre-Negotiations
Anchorage, AK

May 10-14, 2027
ATHC Final
Negotiations
Anchorage, AK

previously confirmed by the Senate on August 7. He will continue in his role as Senior Advisor to Secretary Kennedy while assuming the role of IHS Director. Director 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 Policy and Economic Development (DAS-PED), and he also has experience on Capitol Hill. On August 24, Mr. Cruz issued a [Dear Tribal Leader Letter \(DTLL\)](#) regarding his assumption of office, his priorities as Director, and his commitment to working alongside Tribal Nations.

IHS September 9, 2026 Dear Tribal Leader Letter

On September 9, 2026, the Indian Health Service (IHS) issued a [Dear Tribal Leader Letter \(DTLL\)](#) with updates on the recent passage of the Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2027, and clarifications on its impact on IHS funding. IHS will begin to distribute Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 funds to IHS programs, Tribal Health Programs, and Urban Indian Organizations on October 1, 2026. Because IHS receives advance appropriations, the Continuing Resolution (CR) passed on September 2 impacts only activities that did not receive advance appropriations, which include health care facilities and sanitation facilities construction among others. Under the CR, IHS also has the authority to fully fund all Contract Support Costs and Payments for Tribal Leases due during the Continuing Resolution period.

IHS August 25, 2026 Dear Tribal Leader Letter

On August 25, 2026, the Indian Health Service (IHS) issued a Dear Tribal Leader Letter announcing that the Office of Human Resources Division of Commissioned Personnel Support has created a new opportunity to advertise open positions at Tribal and Urban Indian health care facilities through the U.S. Public Health Service's (USPHS) Commissioned Corps vacancy announcement process. If you would like to have your position advertised through this process, please contact us at IHSCorpsRecruitment@ihs.gov for additional information. [View the full Dear Tribal Leader Letter here.](#)

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.](#)

OTHER UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS



BBAHC President/CEO Robert J. Clark Announces Retirement

Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC) President/CEO Robert J. Clark has announced his retirement following more than five decades of service. ANHB thanks Mr. Clark for his many years of service and for his dedicated advocacy on behalf of the BBAHC region as well as the entire Alaska Tribal Health System through his role as Chair of the Association of Tribal Health Directors. BBAHC has shared that the Board of Directors is leading a thoughtful transition process focused on maintaining leadership continuity, operational stability, and meaningful engagement with employees, Tribal leaders, communities, and other stakeholders. [View BBAHC's full press release here.](#)

ANTHC Announces Transfer of Ownership of ANMC

On September 4, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) announced that the Indian Health Service (IHS) has officially transferred ownership of the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) to ANTHC. ANHB congratulates ANTHC, Southcentral Foundation, and the Alaska Tribal Health System on this historic achievement. The transfer of ownership took decades to secure and was achieved thanks to the advocacy of Tribal leaders and the Alaska Tribal Health System. For more details on the transfer of ownership of ANMC, [read ANTHC's media release here.](#)

Southcentral Foundation to Partner in Hosting Listening Sessions on AI/AN Elder Medicare Benefits Enrollment

Southcentral Foundation, in partnership with Kauffman and Associates, Inc., and the National Council on Aging, will host two upcoming listening sessions for professionals and American Indian / Alaska Native (AI/AN) elders. The professional listening session will include a facilitated discussion on insights, barriers, and solutions related to supporting AI/AN communities in accessing Medicare benefits. The elder listening session will include a community-centered conversation with AI/AN Elders and community members. Both listening sessions will be held on **Wednesday, September 16, 2026**, at Southcentral Foundation in Anchorage. The Elders Listening Session will take place from 10:30 – 11:00 AM and the Professionals Listening Session from 1:00 – 2:30 PM. All listening session attendees will receive a \$50 gift card as a token of appreciation. For more information, view the flyers for the [elder listening session](#) and [professional listening session](#).

ANHB Approves Resolutions on Self-Governance Expansion and Sovereign Immunity

On August 19, 2026, the ANHB Board of Directors approved two new resolutions. [Resolution No. 01-2026](#) supports expanding Self-

Governance in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to agencies beyond the Indian Health Service (IHS), a long-standing Congressional priority for ANHB and its members.

[Resolution No. 02-2026](#) implores the State of Alaska to end its practice of requiring Tribal Waivers of Sovereign Immunity as a condition for receiving grant funds, including for program funds passed through the State of Alaska to beneficiary Tribes. A similar resolution was passed by the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) in 2022.

ANTHC Hiring Behavioral Health Wellness Clinic Director

ANTHC's Behavioral Health Wellness Clinic is hiring a Director to lead the fully telehealth clinic serving Alaska Native communities across the state. This is a role that blends leadership with hands-on care. ANTHC shares that this is an incredible opportunity to join a compassionate, hard-working team that values humor, community, and a shared commitment to Tribal behavioral health. The team's dedication shows in the results — 84% of clients demonstrated improvement last quarter. If you know someone who is ready to lead an innovative, culturally responsive care model while still doing direct clinical work, please share this opportunity with them. Learn more and apply for the position [here](#).

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

Alaska Native Health Board | 4000 Ambassador Drive, Suite 101, Anchorage, AK 99508
907-729-7510 | www.anhb.org | anhb@anhb.org

Please reply 'Unsubscribe' if you no longer wish to receive ANHB Updates.