



ARIZONA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN HEALTH CARE

February 2024 Newsletter

***Mission statement:** The mission of the AACIHC is to advocate for increasing access to high quality health care programs for all American Indians in Arizona.*

At-a-Glance

Upcoming Conferences

- Tribal Health Summit - Navigating Pandemics Together - **March 12-14, 2024 at the Desert Willow Conference Center in Phoenix, Arizona**
- State-Tribal Epidemiology Summit - **May 8th, 2024 at Creighton University, 3100 N Central Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85012**

Agency Updates

- AHEAD Indigenous Healthcare Career Advancement Training Support
- American Indian Health – AHEC Advisory Council Inauguration
- American Indian Health – AHEC Advisory Council Inauguration
- CDC-CCR Updates

Bill Updates

- SB 1037 AHCCCS Comprehensive Dental Bill - Updates and more!

Acronyms and Definitions

- Did You Know? AHCCCS has an already published Contract and Policy Dictionary *and* a listing of Commonly Used Acronyms

Upcoming Conferences

Tribal Health Literacy Summit: Navigating Pandemics Together

The Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care and its COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant Team is pleased to announce the "Tribal Health Literacy Summit: Navigating Pandemics Together."

The three-day conference will be held from March 12-14, 2024, at the Desert Willow Conference Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

This event will bring together tribal leaders, healthcare professionals, policymakers, educators, and community advocates to address the challenges posed by pandemics and promote health literacy in Indian Country.

It is designed to tackle critical issues related to health literacy, chronic disease management, social determinants of health, health screening, prevention, and the foundations of health literacy within tribal communities.

In addition, there will be discussions on topics such as long COVID, food access, post-COVID mental health, and more. The primary goal is to equip tribal community members with the knowledge, information, and advocacy skills needed to address health disparities, especially in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.



[Register here!](#)

State-Tribal Epidemiology Summit

Join us!

When: May 8, 2024

Where: Creighton University, 3100 N Central Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85012

The Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (AACIHC) has embarked on a joint effort to organize a State-Tribal Epidemiology Summit. To achieve this, AACIHC is working in close collaboration with key stakeholders, including the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), and First Things First (FTF).



[**Register Here**](#)

This collaborative endeavor underscores our commitment to advancing data-driven decision-making between our partners state agencies and Arizona Tribes to ensure

AACIHC Agency Updates

AHEAD Indigenous Healthcare Career Advancement Training Support



The American Indian Health-AHEC in collaboration with the University of Arizona's Office for Rural Health is administering the Advancing Health Equity, Addressing Disparities (AHEAD AZ) program to enhance the American Indian healthcare workforce and the communities they serve. If you are interested in pursuing additional certification or training that will elevate your professional career as well as impact the community you serve, please complete the application in the link.

- [AHEAD Healthcare Career Advancement Application](#)

Indigenous Healthcare Career Advancement Training: A certification or training opportunity to support your career advancement as well as have a positive impact on the community. (Examples include: SANE Training, wound care, nursing advancement, clinical training, CHR certification, modality training, textbook materials, examination fees, etc.) Training/certification that will further your healthcare expertise and improve your community's resources.

If you are interested in submitting an application or would like to learn more about the AIH-AHEC's AHEAD program, please contact Tashina Machain, Youth Program Coordinator, tashina.machain@aacihc.az.gov or Jeff Axtell, Director, Jeffrey.axtell@aacihc.az.gov.



American Indian Health – AHEC Advisory Council Inauguration

The American Indian Health - AHEC Advisory Council held its inaugural meeting

this past January to manage the path of the AIH-AHEC program and its 3-year Strategic Plan implementation. The AIH-AHEC Advisory Council is a sub-counsel of the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care which was established in 1990.

The primary focus of AIH-AHEC is to address the specific healthcare workforce shortages within American Indian Health Care facilities across Arizona along with enhancing the professional development of the current healthcare workforce within our 22 Tribal Nations. The AIH-AHEC Advisory Council represents a diverse group of individuals recognizing the importance of assembling a diverse and knowledgeable Counsel representing Arizona higher educational institutions, Tribal Health Care facilities, and community organizations.

The AIH-AHEC Advisory Council members are; Agnes Attakai MPA, Native Initiatives, Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities; Michael Darragh, MD, San Carlos Apache Health Care; Navaz Dolasa, MD, Gila River Health Care; Holly Figueroa, Arizona Rural Health Association / BCBS; Timian Godfrey, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, University of Arizona College of Nursing; John Molina, MD, Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care; Kim Russell, Navajo Department of Health; and Lillian Smith, DrPH, MPH, Northern Arizona University. The AIH-AHEC Advisory Council is currently pursuing additional members for the Council, to provide a well-rounded, Statewide representation.

The AIH-AHEC just completed their first 3-Year Strategic Plan in which the Advisory Council's role will be accountable for overseeing the planned objectives and ensuring success in its overall operations. The Advisory Council will also serve as a path to other organizations and Tribal communities as the program attempts to reach out to all 22 Arizona Tribal Communities. For more information about the American Indian Health – AHEC Advisory Council or the program itself, please reach out to Tashina Machain, tashina.machain@aacihc.az.gov or Jeff Axtell, Jeffrey.axtell@aacihc.az.gov, or call us at 928-714-6925.



CHR_s WITH uS!

CDC-CCR Updates

As the CDC-CCR *CHR_s WITH uS!* grant enters its last year of the grant cycle, the main goal is to strengthen the sustainability efforts of the Community Health Representative (CHR) workforce. The CDC-CCR team is working to continuously provide technical assistance in planning training events, grant partner meetings, and other events beneficial to the CHR Grant Partners. One of the sustainability efforts that the team has been working on is ensuring that every CHR applies for the Community Health Worker Voluntary Certification.

If you are interested in learning more about the CHR Workforce, here are some resources:

- [AACIHC CDC-CCR Grant](#)
- [IHS Community Health Representative](#)

Bill Update: SB 1037

AHCCCS Comprehensive Dental Services

All AHCCCS (Medicaid) Members

Sponsor: Rep. T. J. Shope

Summary: This bill, if passed, would authorize AHCCCS to seek CMS approval to reimburse for preventative dental services up to \$1000 per member per benefit year (October 1 to September 30 of each year). Currently adults, 21 years of age and older, receive adult dental benefits only in the form of emergency services, up to \$1000 per member per benefit year. This bill, if passed by both Chambers and signed into law by the Governor, and if it makes it into the budget, would authorize AHCCCS to request CMS approval to update their current waiver they operate under to include this dental benefit.

Of interest to indigenous peoples and tribal providers, this would include no monetary cap for preventative dental services provided to American Indians and Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) who receive their preventative dental care via an Indian health care dental provider that receives 100% FMAP (e.g. IHS and 638 providers that meet necessary requirements, such as operating within the "4 walls" if applicable) for the cost of dental services in excess of limits in place for if this bill is approved.

Status: This Senate Bill was heard in the **Senate Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024**. Representatives from the Oral Health Coalition and the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (Dr. John Molina and Alison Lovell) were in attendance in support of the bill. It passed this committee.

It then was heard at the Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday, January 30th, 2024. Representatives from the Oral Health Coalition and the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (Dr. John Molina and Alison Lovell) were in attendance in support of the bill. It passed this committee as well.

Next, we must see if this bill is added to the agenda for the Senate Rules Committee for a similar discussion. If this passes through the Senate Rules Committee, it would be cleared for consideration by the full Senate. However, there is a possibility that it may be held back by the Senate as a part of budget negotiations.

[Track the Bill](#)

Arizona Oral Health Coalition

AZOHC emerged from the coordinated effort of multiple organizations and stakeholders who were concerned about the state of oral health in Arizona and the lack of cohesive action to address disparities. In 2015, advocates and leaders held a policy workshop to discuss oral health, which led to the Arizona Oral Health Steering Committee. The Steering Committee participated in the development of the AZ State Oral Health Plan. Ultimately, the Steering Committee became the Arizona Oral Health Coalition in 2016. In 2020, the Coalition underwent multiple structural changes, including reorganizing committees, updating the strategic plan, and completing equity assessments.

They have created a fact sheet to break down the value that SB 1037 can bring.

[View Fact Sheet](#)

Acronyms and Definitions

Did You Know? AHCCCS has a published Contract and Policy Dictionary *and* a listing of Commonly Used Acronyms!

Have you ever been reading an article on Medicaid, or attempting to review one of the many documents on the AHCCCS website, and thought to yourself, "*What on earth does that mean?*" or, "*What does that acronym stand for?*"

Well never fear! AHCCCS actually has published documents to assist with both common questions:

- **The AHCCCS Contract and Policy Dictionary** is an actual dictionary of AHCCCS and Medicaid terms. It acts as a central location for definitions that you will see used in the various AHCCCS Contractors Operations Manual (ACOM) and AHCCS Medical Policy Manual (AMPM) Policies that are posted on the AHCCCS website. These terms are important to know, as they will help in your understanding of things like coverage and benefits, eligibility criteria, and MCO requirements.
- This Contract and Policy Dictionary is in the process of being hyperlinked within all policies found in both the ACOM and AMPM.
- Please note, that some policies have specific terms/definitions that may have a slightly different meaning for that respective Policy. When that is the case, those terms/ definitions will remain in the Policy and will include a statement indicating 'For purposes of this Policy only'.

- **The AHCCCS Related Acronyms Reference Guide** is a repository that defines any and all acronyms that you might see in various spots on the AHCCCS website, or when discussing Medicaid in general. Please keep in mind, that there are cases where AHCCCS uses an acronym a little differently than other states might.

To view the **AHCCCS Contract and Policy Dictionary**, please access the following link:

- <https://azahcccs.gov/Resources/Downloads/ContractAndPolicyDictionary.pdf>

To view the **AHCCCS Related Acronyms**, please access the following link:

- <https://www.azahcccs.gov/shared/acronyms.html>

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The AACIHC, utilizing its knowledge of Indian healthcare issues and tribal sovereignty, serves as a resource for Tribal governments and the State of Arizona, and supports prevention, training, education, and policy development as the keys to meeting the unique health care needs of the Arizona Indian population.

**AZ Advisory Council on Indian Health Care
602-542-5725**

**Visit the AACIHC
website**

