



April 2025 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.

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Director's Note

Greetings everyone!

As we move into warmer weather, I hope you are all staying cool and hydrated. One of the health topics for the month of May is raising awareness about the importance of mental health and wellbeing. Mental health is important for our overall wellbeing, because it affects how we think, feel and act. Our mental health also affects how we cope with daily stress and our personal and work relationships.



Dr. John Molina

*Director, Arizona Advisory
Council on Indian Health Care*

Ways to build good mental health are getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, building social support relationships, taking time to relax, or doing activities you enjoy. Our Native American people utilize traditional ceremonies, like talking circles, sweat lodge and smudging to find balance and harmony, which also helps create good mental health. Having good mental health improves our overall physical wellbeing and quality of life.

This month's Newsletter has information related to upcoming meetings and sessions you may find of interest, legislative updates, an introduction to new team members and a survey related to Accessing Health Insurance. These articles are meant to keep you informed about health issues as we all make efforts to improve the health of our communities.

Best wishes to all!

AACIHC Agency Updates

Legislative Updates



AHCCCS: Listening Sessions on the future of Arizona Medicaid's 1115 Waiver

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) invites community members, stakeholders, and all interested parties to participate in upcoming Listening Sessions regarding the October 1, 2027, renewal of Arizona's Section 1115 Medicaid Demonstration Waiver. The Section 1115 Waiver authorizes key programs and initiatives on a 5-year basis. These programs include but are not limited to:

- The Managed Care delivery system which includes all of the AHCCCS Health Plans,
- The Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS),
- Targeted Investments (T.I) 2.0,

- Parents as Paid Caregivers Program (PPCG),
- KidsCare Expansion,
- Housing and Health Opportunities (H2O), and
- More!

These sessions are an important opportunity for you to:

- Understand the existing programs under the current demonstration and timelines, including legislative review/approval
- Share your experiences, questions, and suggestions
- Help shape the future of AHCCCS to provide comprehensive, quality health care to those in need.

Register Here:

Session I: June 12 (2-4 p.m.):

https://ahcccs.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XtoznhutQNuiIUo6-LnDAA#/registration

Session II: June 24 (2-4 p.m.):

https://ahcccs.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_LlgQbI7eSkKLJDnQxkx94Q#/registration

You can also submit feedback in writing by emailing: waiverpublicinput@azahcccs.gov

Every year, the AACIHC identifies and tracks legislative bills that may have a potential impact on the American Indian health care system in Arizona. Please see the information below on the bills we are currently tracking:

LEGISLATIVE TRACKER



www.aacihc.az.gov

The AACIHC identifies and tracks legislative bills that may have a potential impact on the American Indian health care system in Arizona. Please scan the QR code to see the bills we are currently tracking!

If you have any questions regarding AACIHC's Policy Initiatives, please reach out to: Corey Hemstreet, Legislative Specialist |
Email: corey.hemstreet@aacihc.az.gov

Intern Highlight

Intern Highlight

"I was born and raised in Flagstaff, Arizona. During my four years at Flagstaff High School, I was a member of the varsity basketball team, graduating in 2019. I received a Bachelor of Public Health with a Minor in Indigenous Health from Northern Arizona University in 2023, and a Master of Public Health within the Indigenous Health Program from NAU in May of 2025. I enjoy spending time with family and friends, riding my longboard, reading, fashion, and solo traveling. I hope to work in community-based initiatives to initiate health policies that advance health equity in the United States."

Josie's Contributions:

- Initiated interactive activities and collected qualitative data to work alongside the Tribal Health Advisory Workgroup (THAW) to develop their Strategic Plan.
- Conducted literature reviews and culturally appropriate analysis of public health data and policies to create a policy brief about MMIP and an informative presentation about the interconnectedness between Mental and Behavioral Health, Sober Living Homes, and MMIP.

Josephine (Josie) Faull

Northern Arizona University - Masters of
Public Health, Indigenous Health Program



AMERICAN INDIAN
HEALTH-AHEC

AHEC Welcomes Newest Team Member - Brooke Rector

The American Indian Health – AHEC (AIH-AHEC) is pleased to welcome Brooke Rector as the new Youth Program Coordinator for our program. Brooke grew up in Arizona and spent much of her time in Whiteriver, Arizona with her extended family.

Brooke graduated from the University of Arizona with her Bachelor of Science in Public Health and was a Wildcat Excellence Award and White Mountain Apache Tribe Scholarship Recipient.



Brooke previously worked with the Arizona Department of Health Services with the FDA Tobacco Compliance Program to monitor retailers and distributor compliance with federal tobacco laws and regulations throughout the state of Arizona. Brooke also has interned with White Mountain Apache Behavioral Health Services conducting research about healthcare services with Tribal members in coordination with AHCCCS.

In her free time, Brooke enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, baking, and reading.

Brooke can be reached at brooke.rector@aacihc.az.gov with any questions regarding youth programming. Please join us in welcoming Brooke to The AIH-AHEC Team!

Upcoming Information Session: Tribal Healthcare Workforce Overview

Join us on June 5 at 2:00 PM (AZ time) for a virtual information session highlighting current initiatives aimed at strengthening the tribal healthcare workforce across Arizona. Hosted by the American Indian Health – Area Health Education Center (AIH-AHEC), this session will provide an overview of youth programs, clinical education efforts, and community partnerships that are creating more pathways into health professions for Native students and professionals. All are welcome to attend!



**American Indian Health
Area Health Education
Center**

Overview of Tribal Healthcare Workforce Development Initiatives

**Wednesday, June 5, 2025
2:00 PM (Arizona Time)**

Register in advance for this session:
[https://ahcccs.zoom.us/meeting/register/
NBIXj50-STyjNf5MctDghw](https://ahcccs.zoom.us/meeting/register/NBIXj50-STyjNf5MctDghw)

After registering, you will receive a
confirmation email containing
information about joining the session.



Register Now!



Tribal Health Advisory Workgroup (THAW)

Upcoming THAW Meetings

The Tribal Health Advisory Workgroup (THAW)—a collaborative effort between AHCCCS, ADHS, and AACIHC—is dedicated to strengthening partnerships and ensuring meaningful tribal input in healthcare initiatives. We invite you to sign up for our updates to stay connected with THAW's progress and the latest news.

Upcoming THAW Meeting Details:

- **Date:** June 5, 2025
- **Time:** 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- [Register Here!](#)

Tribal Pandemic Coalition (TPC)

The Tribal Pandemic Coalition serves as a statewide coalition that could meet periodically, and rapidly mobilize to share information and resources in the event of another pandemic or serious health-related concern to tribal communities in Arizona.

The TPC's goal is to continue resource sharing and to plan for any future potential pandemics, so our communities may remain happy and healthy.

Upcoming TPC Meeting Details:

- **Date:** May 29, 2025
 - **Time:** 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM
 - [Register Here!](#)
-



Upcoming Webinar: Health Profile of American Indian and Alaska Natives in Arizona

PRESENTERS



Dr. Keisha Jenkins
CDC State Assignee
Epidemiologist



Darien Fuller
Tribal Health Epidemiologist



WEBINAR

Health Profile of American Indian and Alaska Natives in Arizona



TUESDAY
June 3, 2025



START AT
11:00AM

REGISTER NOW

In partnership with the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care, we will be hosting a Health Profile of American Indian and Alaska Natives in Arizona report presentation on Tuesday, June 3rd at 11:00 am.

Session Objectives:

- Describe the methods and data sources used to develop the Health Profile report.
- Summarize the key findings related to the health of American Indian and Alaska Native populations in Arizona.
- Interpret trends in mortality and life expectancy.
- Identify prevalent health risk behaviors and their implications.
- Assess health status indicators, examine the impact of social determinants of health and discuss approaches to promote health equity.
- Highlight insights from qualitative data collected from community engagement.
- Discuss potential public health actions.

Intended Audience:

- Community members
- Tribal Health Directors & Staff
- Tribal Epidemiologists & Data Analysts
- Community Health Representatives (CHRs)
- Indian Health Service (IHS) & Tribal 638 Facilities Staff
- Anyone working with Tribal Communities

Health Access Survey

Healthcare and Health Insurance Access Survey, Story Telling, and Next Tribal Pandemic Coalition Meeting Date Poll

The AACIHC is currently engaging in Medicaid defense and healthcare/health insurance access advocacy, and to prepare for this we are distributing a survey and collecting stories surrounding these topics. To make this successful (we are in the very early stages of this) we need your assistance. We have outlined this further below.

1. Healthcare and Health Insurance Access Survey: We have a survey that

we are distributing to partners to hopefully take, and we would love if the CHR Directors could also distribute as they see fit to their own distribution lists. This survey will provide additional baseline information on healthcare and health insurance access. [Health Insurance Access Survey - Google Forms](#)

2. **Story Telling:** We are collecting personal stories from members of Tribes regarding challenges they have had with accessing healthcare and using health insurance. This is to assist in our efforts to expand health access in tribal communities. These stories can be kept anonymous if the provider of the story prefers. The reason for story collecting is to provide decision-makers a tangible, human connection to show the downstream impact of health policies and regulations, since important policies and legislation are often decided upon by individuals who are not directly impacted by the regulations they take part in creating. Any stories provided will be used *only in accordance with the permission and comfort levels of the story provider and we would consult the individual in regards to how we may use their story prior to using it.* The story collection and topics requested are *broad*. These can be provided by setting a time up with us to discuss or through the survey link sent out.

Examples can be things like:

- A family who has struggled to find transportation to healthcare;
- A family who cannot find a specialist within the I/T/U system or that is in-network through their health insurance;
- Difficulty navigating the in's and out's of health insurance;
- Success with using the Health Insurance Marketplace to purchase private health insurance;
- High cost of care stories;
- Dental access stories;
- How healthcare has impacted chronic diseases or acute/communicable illnesses in their community or within their own families; and
- Anything else someone can think of

Marketplace Training Series coming soon:

In an effort to further reduce health disparities and ensure greater health insurance coverage for all American Indians and Alaska Natives in Arizona, we will soon be rolling out an informational series on the Health Insurance Marketplace. The Marketplace acts as a type of 'gap filler' insurance, for those who do not qualify for Medicaid, but do not have employer-sponsored health insurance. Additionally, as mentioned above, we are gathering stories regarding the experiences of AI/AN communities when it comes to a lack of health insurance and a lack of access to health insurance, to assist in advocacy efforts in support of Medicaid protections and expansion of the Marketplace plans (and hopefully more affordable plans). Stories provided can include Marketplace storytelling as well.

Quick facts about the Marketplace:

- Plans are often available with tax credits at a low cost per month (often \$10 or less);
- While the I/T/U system is available, a lack of health insurance can result in difficulties accessing care when not near an I/T/U or when needing a

specialty appointment that is not available in the nearest I/T/U, when purchased referred care is not available, so the Marketplace can provide protection from high bills when care is sought elsewhere;

- Available for families;
- Offers *both* health insurances *and* comprehensive dental plans; and
- Allows individuals to shop and compare between all plans to see what works best for their family.

Our request for our partners is three fold:

1. We would love if CHR Directors and Advocates could take the survey regarding healthcare and health insurance access;
2. We would also love it if the survey was shared with additional members of Tribes in Arizona or workgroups;
3. Provide any storytelling (that you feel comfortable with) that would help all of us in our end goal is to collect information about healthcare access and health insurance access, so as to help navigate and mitigate health disparities affecting tribal communities.

If you have any questions please let me know (Alison.lovell@aacihc.az.gov) and we here at the AACIHC truly appreciate you and all of the work you have done for tribal communities here in Arizona.

Sign Up for AACIHC News Updates & Newsletters!

[Sign Up Here!](#)

Stay up to date and access more information about our agency! Click or scan the QR Code below to learn more!

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AACIHC's Office Location



**Arizona Advisory Council
on Indian Health Care
AHCCCS | 801 E. Jefferson
Street, MD 4600
Phoenix, AZ 85034**

Office #: (602) 542-5725

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**

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