



## December 2024 Newsletter

### A Year in Review!

### At-a-Glance

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### Director's Note

Greetings everyone!

As we close out the year 2024, I hope this newsletter finds you and your family doing well during this holiday season. Reflecting on this last year, I suspect we may have discovered ways to improve our health and wellbeing. We did encounter challenges this last year, but we can see them as opportunities to improve on the health and wellness of our communities.



**Dr. John Molina**

*Director, Arizona Advisory  
Council on Indian Health Care*

On the other hand, we had a very successful experience engaging with our partners through the conferences, summits and trainings that we provided

throughout the year. Our staff at AACIHC and myself are very grateful for the opportunity to have engaged with you, our tribal partners and organizations, and have learned ways of improving our work in continuing our mission to improve the health status of our communities. As you read our newsletter “A Year in Review” you will have more details on our many activities as well as some insight into exciting events coming up for 2025.

Be well everyone!

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## **AACIHC Accomplishments & More**

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### **Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (AACIHC)**

As an agency we worked on updating our strategic plan which included the following revisions:

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the AACIHC is to serve as a resource for all Tribal governments and the State of Arizona by supporting prevention, training, education, workforce development, policy and legislation to meet the unique health care needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations in Arizona. We seek to educate and advocate for improved health outcomes.

#### **VISION STATEMENT**

The AACIHC strives to be recognized as a trusted resource on health equity for all Tribal Nations and American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities throughout Arizona.

#### **VALUES STATEMENT**

A - Authenticity  
A - Accountability  
C - Culture  
I - Integrity  
H - Holistic  
C - Community

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### **Arizona Health Improvement Plan (AzHIP)**

- State-Tribal Epidemiology Summit - May 8th, 2024 at Creighton University, 3100 N Central Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85012



- [illegible]

- Health and Housing Among Tribal Communities in Arizona
  - The AACIHC coordinated a study to gather insights from Tribal Health stakeholders in Arizona, focusing on health and housing challenges in Tribal communities. The report outlines the need for a combined approach to address healthcare and housing needs and proposing strategies for integrating these services. It shares examples of effective initiatives and strategies, highlighting successful efforts to improve health and housing conditions in Tribal communities. This report serves as a critical resource for understanding and addressing the health and housing needs of Tribal communities in Arizona.
- Enhancing State-Tribal Engagement
  - The AACIHC has completed an action plan to enhance how state workers engage with Tribal Nations and communities in Arizona. We researched existing training materials, identified common themes, and developed recommended improvements. Working closely with the Tribal Liaisons from partnered state agencies, we gathered and analyzed current training resources.
- Informational Webinar Series
  - We are excited to share the successful completion of 2 informational webinars, which were directly shaped by the valuable feedback we received from our Tribal stakeholder survey.
- Moving Forward
  - These achievements mark significant progress in AACIHC's mission to advocate for improving health outcomes for the AI/AN population in Arizona. The collaborative efforts between the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (AACIHC), Department of Economic Security (DES), Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), Arizona Health Care Cost Containment

System (AHCCCS), and First Things First (FTF) have laid a strong foundation for ongoing improvements and continued partnership. The AACIHC looks forward to building on this momentum and continuing our work to create meaningful and lasting changes that benefit Arizona's Tribal communities.

For more information or questions, please contact Mckayla Keams, Executive Project Coordinator, at [mckayla.keams@aacihc.az.gov](mailto:mckayla.keams@aacihc.az.gov).

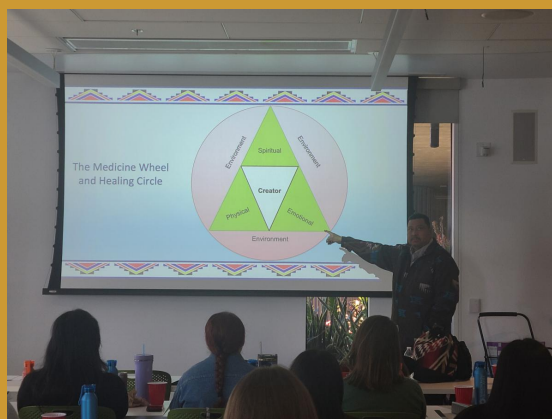


## American Indian Health - AHEC

- AHEAD Indigenous Healthcare Career Advancement Training Support
  - A certification or training opportunity to support your career advancement as well as have a positive impact on the community.
- The American Indian Health - AHEC Advisory Council held its inaugural meeting in January to manage the path of the AIH-AHEC program and its 3-year Strategic Plan implementation.
- 2023-2025 AIH-AHEC Scholars Program
  - In February, the AIH-AHEC Scholars Program kicked off with an unforgettable weekend in Southern Arizona which included trainings and fun activities. This paved the way for the appreciation gained for the rich cultural tapestry of Southern Arizona and reassured that healing, resilience and culture all go hand and hand.



A group photo from the AIH-AHEC Scholars Program kickoff weekend. The group attended the 85th Annual Tohono O'odham Rodeo and Fair



Cultural Humility Training led by Miguel Flores Jr. LISAC, Daniel Sestiaga MPH and Felina M. CordovaMarks Dr.PH, MPH.

- Summer Scrubs Program
  - Summer Scrubs is a health career exploration program that helps students prepare for their future in the health professions. With this program, students got the opportunity to participate in



professional lectures, health-related field trips and hands-on lab experiences.

- Native SCOPE
  - In partnership with Native Health, the AIH-AHEC hosted Native Skills Careers Opportunities Pathways Experience (Native SCOPE). The program kicked off with an engaging orientation session, where students had the opportunity to meet their peers and our dedicated team of instructors. Throughout the summer, participants were immersed in hands-on activities, interactive workshops, and insightful lectures from experienced healthcare professionals.
- Advisory Council Retreat
  - The American Indian Health – AHEC held its first AIH-AHEC Advisory Council Retreat in Flagstaff with Council members and staff in attendance. The AIH-AHEC Advisory Board's role is pivotal in overseeing the planned objectives and ensuring success in its overall operations.



(Pictured left to right back row, Francene Larzelere Siquah, Dr. Navaz Dolasa, Jeff Axtell (staff) Dr. John Molina, Holly Figueroa) (Front row Tashina Machain (staff) Timian Godfrey, Ernestine Nasingoetewa (staff) (Members not present include Agness Attakai, Dr. Michael Darragh, Kim Russell, Lillian Smith and Miguel Flores)

- American Indian Health - AHEC launched their new website!
  - Visit the page here: <https://americanindianhealth-ahec.az.gov/>
- Arizona Telemedicine Program Webinar Series
  - The Arizona Telemedicine Program, Southwest Telehealth Resource Center and the American Indian Health-Area Health Education Center partnered for a session focusing on forensic healthcare as utilized within the tribal communities.



## CHRs WITH US!

### CDC-CCR Team

- Community Health Worker (CHW) Sustainability Summit
  - Members of the CDC-CCR Team gathered in Spokane, Washington April 16-18th to attend the Community Health Worker (CHW) Sustainability Summit hosted by Envision. The Summit offered recipients of CDC's Community Health Workers for COVID Response and Resilient Communities (CCR-2109) the opportunity to showcase their work and strategize together about how to continue CHW programs in the absence of CCR grant funding.



Members of the CDC-CCR Grant Cohort and the poster presented on the CHRs WITH uS! achievements thus far at the Sustainability Summit.

- Now is the Time: Integrating and Reimbursing CHR Services Withing Tribal Health and Social Systems
  - The CDC-CCR CHRs WITH uS! Grant held the “Now is the Time: Integrating and Reimbursing CHR Services Within Tribal Health and Social Systems” Event at the High Country Conference Center in Flagstaff, AZ. The integration event convened CHR Directors, CHRs, and other champion healthcare professionals to discuss Medicaid reimbursement and billing processes for CHRs.
- Exploring Goals of Care in Tribal Communities
  - On June 29, 2024, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC) Tribal Community Health Representative (CHR) Program hosted the "Exploring Goals of Care in Tribal Communities" Conference. The main focus of this event was Palliative Care, an essential aspect of healthcare that provided valuable information to tribal healthcare team members in attendance.
- Quarterly Meetings and Site Visits
  - The CDC-CCR Team gathered all of their grant partners for 4 Quarterly Meeting and visited them directly for Site Visits. These gathering provided opportunities to share updates, celebrate successes and plan for future goals.





Site Visit to Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community



Quarterly Meeting at Cocopah Tribe

- **CHR Summit VIII**
  - This year the CDC-CCR Grant Team participated in leading the planning efforts for the 8th CHR Summit. This year, the summit was held December 3-5th in Tucson, Arizona at Casino Del Sol. This conference provided many training opportunities for CHRs to take away and utilize in their everyday work.

## COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant Team

- **Tribal Health Summit - Navigating Pandemics Together - March 12-14, 2024 at the Desert Willow Conference Center in Phoenix, Arizona**
  - This event brought together tribal leaders, healthcare professionals, policymakers, educators, and community advocates to address the challenges posed by pandemics and promote health literacy in Indian Country.
- **COVID-19 Health Disparities Team Attends the Navajo Health Education Program Annual Meeting**
  - In Mid-December, Summer Hassan, Grants Manager, and Darien Fuller, Epidemiologist, attended and presented at the Navajo Health Education Program annual meeting. Darien Fuller presented at this meeting on vaccine hesitancy and how it is impacted by health literacy in Tribal communities.
- **Fort McDowell Health Fair**
  - The health fair was jam-packed with organizations providing resources to the community on all health-related topics! The team had the opportunity to table at this event, and we provided infographics and handouts to community members related to COVID-19, RSV, Flu, heat-related illness, community mask-wearing, and mental health during the pandemic.



Darien Fuller and Ariana Granger at the Fort  
McDowell Health Fair

- Tribal Pandemic Coalition
  - The Tribal Pandemic Coalition is a think-tank-based coalition of volunteers advising on the deliverables of COVID-19 Health Disparities Grants. These meeting provided opportunity to meet and discuss sustainability for the coalition at the Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care.
- Closer to Home Series
  - On May 4, Darien Fuller, our epidemiologist, joined the Strong Heart Study for their Star Wars-themed community health event to host a table, share health educational material, and hand out our Tribal Tangible Toolkits to community members. The team had an informational table set up with tables from other programs about digestive health, sobriety services, massage therapy, and other vendors.
- Virtual Training Series
  - The AACIHC's Health Education team and the COVID-19 Health Disparities grant team partnered to kick off a virtual training series in June. This series is held via Zoom and has continued into the Fall and Winter with a multitude of training topics including: Medicaid Billing, Vaccine Hesitancy, Self Care, Epidemiology and more! Stay tuned as we will continue to promote our upcoming trainings in 2025!
- Tribal Health Literacy Workshop: Applying Health Literacy, Patient Advocacy, and Data for Stronger Communities
  - This hybrid workshop was composed of topics including Health Literacy, Patient Advocacy, and the Role of Data in Health Disparities.



## Thank You

It is with great sadness that we have to say goodbye to our team members on the COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant Team. As the grant term draws to a close, we reflect on the hard work and dedication of the team members past & present. Without them, all of the incredible accomplishments would not have been possible. We wish them the best on their new ventures!

## Legislative Updates



### Bills that we tracked in 2024:

- [SB 1037](#): AHCCCS Comprehensive Dental Services
- [SB 1361](#)- sober living homes
- [SB 1655](#)- behavioral health entities, regulations
- [HB 2205](#)- fraud unit; investigations; annual report
- [HB 2249](#)- residential care facilities; inspections
- [HB 2587](#)- adult protective Services; reporting records
- [HB 2764](#)- long-term care; enforcement; memory care
- [HB 2827](#)- sober living; enforcement; recovery residences

### News and Updates:

- ADHS restructured Licensing Bureaus
  - The Arizona Department of Health Services has made some changes to their Division of Public Health Licensing to better serve the needs of the State of Arizona and our vulnerable populations. Read more about this on the blog released [here](#).

- Tribal Health Advisory Workgroup (THAW) Hosted the Inaugural Meeting
  - This group is a collaboration between state agencies, Tribal Leaders, Urban Indian Organizations (UIOs), Tribal Regional Behavioral Health Authorities (TRBHAs), and IHS/638 facilities. These sessions provide a vital platform for tribal communities in Arizona to offer meaningful input on the development of programs, policies, and health care initiatives. Stay tuned for more updates on future meeting dates!

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:

The graphic is a promotional poster for the AACIHC's Legislative Tracker. At the top left is the AACIHC logo, which consists of a circular emblem with a sunburst and the text "ARIZONA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN HEALTH CARE". To the right of the logo is a dark red banner with the words "LEGISLATIVE TRACKER" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below the banner is a large, stylized orange and blue square frame containing a QR code. The QR code has a small silhouette of a person in the center. To the right of the QR code frame, the website address "www.aacihc.az.gov" is written vertically in a dark red, sans-serif font. Below the QR code frame, there is a paragraph of text in a dark red, sans-serif font. The entire graphic is set against a white background with decorative blue and orange geometric shapes on the sides.

**LEGISLATIVE TRACKER**

[www.aacihc.az.gov](http://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](mailto:corey.hemstreet@aacihc.az.gov)

**Health Education Training and  
Technical Support Series**



## Year in Review!

The Arizona Advisory Council on Indian Health Care (AACIHC) has a legislative mandate, per Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S.) 36-2902-.02 A.1 to “provide technical assistance to tribal governments on tribal health care initiatives” and has enthusiastically embraced this as a part of our agency’s strategic plan!



In 2024, we launched our formal technical support and health education series, providing training to 1242 individuals via 51 training sessions.

Please note, that these numbers are neither reflective of technical support provided by our agency through a specific grant’s funding, nor reflective of individuals trained during conferences held in 2024, such as the Tribal Health Literacy Conference, the Tribal Epidemiology Summit, or the CHR Summit.

- When grant-specific trainings and conference-hosted trainings, where agency subject matter expertise was utilized, are included in our tally, we provided training to nearly 3,000 individuals in 2024!

Some of our most popular trainings this year have included our CHR Billing Series; Medicaid Health Insurance Options for American Indians and Alaskan Natives: Managed Care and Fee-for-Service System Navigation; Staying Physically Active in a Busy World; Mask Wearing 101; Medicaid Health Insurance Options for American Indians; Lunch and Learn Advocacy Series (Parts 1 and 2); Data Sovereignty; Epidemiology; the COVID Vaccine; Long COVID; and the Health and Housing Report Summary.

Requests for training types continue to come in, and in the upcoming months we intend to have new trainings covering topics like: Burnout; the Vaccine Manufacturing Process; What are Vaccines and How Do They Work?; the RSV Vaccine; Nutrition and Diabetes; a formal Grant Writing series; Self-Care and Mindfulness; and Health and Hygiene in the Workplace.

We will continue to expand our available offering of trainings, and to request either a health education or a technical support training on a topic of interest, please use the below Google Form, and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

- <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe8OEOxbhd5yKxEV3SVUBIPJrZTy4ktZmliRYaXxqPROccNJw/viewform>

We have also created a Training and Technical Assistance webpage on the AACIHC’s website, where prior training PowerPoint slides shall be posted for additional viewing after the webinars have ended. The AACIHC’s Training and Technical Assistance webpage can be found at:

- <https://aacihc.az.gov/aacihc-trainings>

If you have any questions surrounding the technical support series, please outreach Alison Lovell, Business Operations Administrator, at [alison.lovell@aacihc.az.gov](mailto:alison.lovell@aacihc.az.gov).

We look forward to continuing to serve the community in this new year!

## 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!



## AACIHC's Office Location

Arizona Advisory Council  
on Indian Health Care  
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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  
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