

HHS awards \$139 million for Special Diabetes Program for Indians

Written by Staff Reports

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11 organizations, tribes are being funded for the first time

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Indian Health Service, is investing \$139 million in funding for the Fiscal Year 2023 Special Diabetes Program for Indians to provide diabetes prevention and treatment services for American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Funding awards have been made to 302 tribal, urban, and IHS sites in 35 states under the new, five-year grant cycle that began on Jan. 1. Eleven organizations and tribes are being funded for the first time.

“HHS is committed to eliminating health disparities in communities across the country,” HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a press release published on Jan. 25. “American Indian and Alaska Native communities have historically had disproportionately higher rates of diabetes than other populations. Through education and outreach programs like the Special Diabetes Program for Indians, we are successfully implementing evidence-based and community-driven strategies to prevent and treat diabetes in tribal and urban Indian communities.”

Federal data show that the rate of diabetes-related kidney failure decreased by half after implementing population-based diabetes treatment and prevention services like SDPI.

The prevalence of diabetic eye disease (retinopathy) has also fallen in American Indian and Alaska Native adults by more than 50% compared to reports from the 1980s and 1990s. This is a substantial reduction in the risk of vision problems and blindness in American Indian and

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Alaska Native adults with diabetes.

Although it is not possible to determine specific reasons for these decreases, the diabetes prevention services provided by IHS, tribal and urban Indian health facilities very likely contributed.

“IHS is committed to continuing its support for diabetes prevention and treatment for IHS, tribal, and urban Indian health programs,” IHS Director Roselyn Tso said. “Since its inception in 1997, the Special Diabetes Program for Indians has helped to dramatically increase access to important diabetes prevention and treatment services throughout Indian Country.”

SDPI has successfully implemented evidence-based and community-driven strategies to prevent and treat diabetes within American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Using guidance from tribal leaders, the SDPI has also engendered a national diabetes network for American Indians and Alaska Natives. This work supports the Biden-Harris Administration’s goal to end hunger and reduce diet-related diseases by 2030 – all while reducing disparities.

And for any American Indians and Alaska Natives with Medicare prescription drug coverage who receive health care services outside of the Indian health system, the Biden-Harris Administration is delivering on increased access to health care and lower costs. Through the Inflation Reduction Act, a month’s supply of each covered insulin is capped at \$35.

The 11 organizations and tribes that are being funded for the first time include:

Alaska

Native Village of Eyak, Ilanka Community Health Center in Cordova

Arizona

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Native American Connections in Phoenix

Montana

Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana in Great Falls

Native American Development Corporation in Billings

New York

Lockport Service Unit in Lockport

Manlius Service Unit in Manlius

Shinnecock Service Unit in South Hampton

Virginia

Chickahominy Indian Tribe in Providence Forge

Mid-Atlantic/Richmond Service Unit in Richmond

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Monacan Indian Nation in Madison Heights

Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe in King William