

INVEST IN TRIBAL HEALTH AND URBAN INDIAN HEALTH PROGRAMS

STRENGTHENING MONTANA COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE



BIG SKY
Brighter Future

Charting the course for a better Montana.


A person's health should not depend on their race, ethnicity, or zip code. To improve the health outcomes of all Montanans, particularly of American Indians, Montana should:

- Invest state funding in tribal health and urban Indian health programs.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Everyone deserves the opportunity to be healthy. However, as a result of broken treaty obligations, historical trauma over generations, and chronically underfunded health systems, American Indians experience lower health outcomes than non-Indians, including a life expectancy that is, on average, 16 years shorter. This trend also applies to children who are American Indian, who are more likely to die as infants.

These differences can be explained by policies and practices that have created barriers to achieving good health. Montanans who are American Indian are more likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods, even when not living on low incomes themselves. People who live in high-poverty neighborhoods have less access to healthy foods, good jobs, quality schools, and other building blocks of healthy communities. These health disparities are avoidable.



"When healthcare and public health services are culturally tailored, they are more effective and cost efficient.

Montana's first people experience disproportionately high rates of illness and disease, but we have an opportunity to invest in services with a greater likelihood of success in reducing this disparity."

D'Shane Barnett,
All Nations Health Center

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ON THE HORIZON

Invest state funding in tribal health and urban Indian health programs. To help address the health disparities experienced by American Indians in Montana and to supplement funding sources for health facilities serving American Indians, Montana should reinvest state funds to support health services provided by tribal health and urban Indian health programs. As a result of federal Medicaid changes in 2016, the state of Montana and non-tribal health providers should expand partnerships with tribal health clinics, with the federal government picking up a greater share of the costs.

Montana should reinvest these state savings to support health services at tribal health and urban Indian health programs. Montana should look to similar efforts in Washington and California in bolstering support for tribal health and urban Indian health programs to reduce health disparities of state residents who are American Indian. Like in California, program funding can be directed toward new health services and improve capacity beyond those made by the federal government. These programs promote self-determination and allow tribal nations and organizations to provide culturally appropriate, trauma-informed care.



ABOUT BIG SKY BRIGHTER FUTURE

Big Sky Brighter Future is charting a clear course to rebuild our state. This concrete plan for lawmakers has specific proposals to help families, workers, children, and communities, and creates a tax code that works for everyone. Montana cannot go back to the time when families faced barriers to build their best future. We can move our state forward and make it one where we can all live, work, and enjoy all Big Sky Country has to offer. There's a better Montana on the horizon, and this is how we get there.