



CALIFORNIA RURAL INDIAN HEALTH BOARD, INC.

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STATE ASSEMBLYMAN GARCIA INTRODUCES A.B. 839 TO HELP TRIBES AND TRIBAL HEALTH PROGRAMS WHO SERVE MEDI-CAL PATIENTS

Sacramento, CA— Today Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia (D-Riverside) introduced legislation that would allow Tribal Health Programs to seek direct reimbursement from the federal government for Medi-Cal targeted case management services. The U.S. Health and Human Services Agency would cover half the cost incurred by the Tribe or Tribal Health Program that provides the local match. Assemblyman Garcia stated, “I am proud to support Indian Tribes in the state and in my district in a way that will improve the delivery of healthcare.” This is a win-win for everyone because the state’s general fund is not affected, and Tribes and Tribal Health Programs get to recoup 50 percent of their cost to provide effective case management.”

Case management services are essential to providing the best quality healthcare, coordinate specialty care, and manage chronic conditions. Often times this service is provided to a disabled Tribal member or homebound elder living in or near reservations and Rancherias. Most Tribes in California do not operate lucrative businesses and when their members become ill, they rely heavily on Medi-Cal and the federal Indian Health Service, which is vastly underfunded.

The bill is sponsored by the California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc. (CRIHB). CRIHB is a nonprofit agency, incorporated in 1969 and sanctioned by 33 federally recognized Tribes in California to provide health care services and technical assistance through a network of 17 Tribal Health Programs to approximately 28,000 members. Lisa Elgin, CRIHB Board Chair, thanked Assemblyman Garcia for his “support and stalwart efforts to always include Tribes and Tribal Health Programs in public policy and lift our collective voices in a respectful government-to-government relationship with the State of California.”

Upon receiving the news, Tribal representatives from Southern California in the Coachella Valley’s 56th Assembly District applauded the effort. “This bill represents a funding increase above the rates negotiated by the Indian Health Service and general reimbursement for Medi-Cal administrative claims. It will make possible the active case management of the ongoing needs of patients and coordination of their care,” said Teresa Sanchez, Board President of the Riverside-San Bernardino County Indian Health, Inc. (RSBCIHI). The consortium services nine Tribes in the two counties. Additionally, Desiree Franco, a representative from the Torres-Martinez Tribe stated, “To care for our American Indian population in rural areas, it is important to strive to provide comprehensive services that will meet their healthcare needs, case management is an important part of this work.”

Dr. Mark LeBeau, CRIHB CEO reiterated his commitment that “every Tribe or Tribal Health Program in the state that wants to participate in Medi-Cal’s Targeted Case Management program, will stand to benefit from Mr. Garcia’s bill.”

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