



## CALIFORNIA RURAL INDIAN HEALTH BOARD, INC.

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### **CA Tribal Health Care Representatives Conclude Successful March on Washington 2019**

**Washington, DC** — This week the California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc. (CRIHB) hosted its annual March on Washington. The 2019 theme was *California Tribal Voices—Making a Difference*. A group of California Tribal health care delegates, forty members strong with ages ranging from twelve to seventy, traveled to Capitol Hill to meet with congressional representatives to advocate for improved health care services and to request additional resources. The delegates represented Tribes in southern, central, and northern California as well as the following Tribal health programs: Anav Tribal Health Clinic; Greenville Rancheria Tribal Health Center; Pit River Health Service; Riverside-San Bernardino County Indian Health; Sonoma County Indian Health Project; Toiyabe Indian Health Project; and Tule River Indian Health Center, and United Indian Health Services.

The three-day event began with legislative updates and advocacy training provided by CRIHB and the National Indian Health Board staff members. The delegation, organized into four groups, then split up and met with scores of lawmakers and legislative staff over two days. CRIHB staff had scheduled fifty meetings with Congressional offices prior to the trip, and the groups met face-to-face with many California lawmakers including: Representative Luis Correa, Representative Jimmy Gomez, Representative Mike Levin, Representative Mike Thompson, Representative Pete Aguilar, Representative Jared Huffman, Representative Doug LaMalfa, Representative Barbara Lee, and Representative Juan Vargas.

During the meetings, the California Tribal health care representatives spoke passionately and strove to educate each congressional representative about the group's key 2020 legislative priorities— the most critical being the fact that the California Indian Health Service Area is not



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receiving its fair share of Purchased/Referred Care, hospital, health center, staff quarter, and joint venture construction funds. The delegation asked the California lawmakers for assistance in rectifying the funding disparities; each congressional office received a hard copy of the three-page California Tribal health care legislative priorities.

The 2019 March on Washington concluded with an all-day informational meeting where presenters from numerous federal agencies briefed the delegation. The presenters included: RADM Michael Weahkee (Zuni), Indian Health Service Principal Deputy Director; Stephanie Birdwell (Cherokee), Veterans Administration Tribal Government Relations Director; Cynthia LaCounte (Chippewa), Administration for Community Living American Indians/Alaskan Natives/Native Hawaiian Programs Director; Dr. David Wilson (Dine), National Institutes of Health (NIH) Tribal Research Office Director; Dr. Juliana Blome, NIH Tribal Research Office Assistant Director; Dr. Stephanie Devaney, NIH All of Us Research Program Director; and Captain Jean Plaschke, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Program Officer.

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