**ACTION: Pass Permanent Reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) Now!**

Background

There is significant bipartisan support for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). Last year, 87% of members in the House of Representatives, and nearly 70% of Senators signed a letter to congressional leadership supporting long-term renewal of SDPI.

**But Congress has yet to finish the job**. Since September 2019, Congress has renewed SDPI *four different times* in short increments of several weeks, or several months. Right now, SDPI is set to expire on November 30, 2020. That is completely unacceptable. **These short-term extensions have caused significant distress for our programs and have created undue challenges for our patients and community members.**

**The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the urgency of reauthorizing SDPI. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), diabetes is one of the biggest risk factors for a more serious COVID-19 illness. American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest rates of diabetes nationwide. Without guaranteed long-term funding for SDPI, our people lives and health are at significant risk.**

Talking Points

* Congress established the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) to address high rates of Type-2 diabetes among American Indians and Alaska Natives.
* At $150 million per year, SDPI funds 301 grantees across Indian Country for culturally appropriate diabetes prevention and treatment services.
* SDPI is one of the most successful public health programs ever implemented. Because of SDPI, rates of End Stage Renal Disease and diabetic eye disease have dropped by more than half.
* Our People are living healthier and stronger lives because of SDPI.
* SDPI is so successful that a 2019 federal report found it’s responsible for saving Medicare $52 million per year. No other program can claim that victory. **Not only does SDPI saves lives, it saves millions of taxpayer dollars doing it.**
* Our programs are losing providers because we don’t know if we’ll have the money to continue paying them. Our patients are very concerned about whether diabetes services will remain available at our clinics. Our program officers aren’t able to launch new programs or engage in long-term planning. We have been forced to delay purchases of medical equipment such as glucometers because of the uncertainty of funding.
* **If we were to lose SDPI, we not only risk turning back the clock on all the incredible gains in our People’s health, our People’s lives will be lost**. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is especially critical that SDPI has permanence of funding.
* In February 2020, we sent a letter to Congressional leadership demanding long-term renewal of SDPI and other health programs, like the Community Health Center Fund.
  + Together, we had 54 signatories on that letter, of which 44 were from Indian Country. It was also signed by partners such as the American Diabetes Association, JDRF, Endocrine Society, and National Association of Community Health Centers who are working with us to renew these important programs. We need to get this done.
* Certainty of funding is critical for my Tribal community. Without it, we can’t engage in long-term program planning, hire needed personnel, and expand services. A 5 year reauthorization of SDPI would provide the longest stretch of guaranteed funding in over a decade. Our community needs 5-year renewal now.
* **We urge you to support permanent reauthorization of SDPI as part of Phase 4 COVID-19 response packages.**
* **We also request that you immediately weigh in with your leadership to demand permanent reauthorization of SDPI**