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Tribal Epidemiology Center Calls for Full Restoration of CDC Data Amid Website Removals

Native-led organization calls act “a violation of treaty rights”

Seattle, WA — The Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI), a [Tribal Epidemiology Center](#) (TEC) and tribal public health authority dedicated to protecting and advancing American Indian and Alaska Native health within urban Indian communities, is demanding key data from websites by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) be immediately restored. These data sets, which are necessary for public health surveillance and response, are critical to the ability of local, state, federal, and tribal governments to make data-driven decisions to ensure the health of the nation.

The CDC removed numerous public-facing data sources, prompting [concern among federal health advisers](#), who are now demanding transparency and immediate restoration. Tribes and Tribal Epidemiology Centers hold a unique relationship that requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to share data in a manner that upholds tribal data sovereignty. This action violates this right.

“The decision to remove essential public health data is a violation of treaty rights,” said Abigail Echo-Hawk (Pawnee), UIHI director. “As tribal public health authorities, Tribes and TECs must have unrestricted access to public health data to fulfill our mission. The CDC’s actions undermine our ability to respond to urgent health crises that disproportionately impact American Indian and Alaska Native communities.”

TECs were authorized by Congress in 2010 as public health authorities. In 2022, the U.S. Government Accountability Office released a [report](#) which found that HHS was out of compliance. As a result, changes occurred across HHS to fully comply with appropriate data sharing that uphold treaty and trust responsibilities. This action directly defies the tribal feedback given in recent tribal consultations that established these changes. TECs are responsible for health information to 574 tribes, 41 Indian Health Service-funded urban Indian organizations, and 9.7 million American Indians and Alaska Natives across the country.

The removal of these datasets compounds existing challenges TECs face in obtaining accurate and complete health data. For years, Tribal nations have fought for equal access to CDC data, a right recognized under federal law but often obstructed in practice. The decision to take down these resources without prior consultation exacerbates health inequities and weakens the ability of TECs to conduct life-saving public health surveillance.

“UIHI stands with all public health experts and agencies that are demanding that CDC immediately restore access to these datasets,” said Echo-Hawk. “We also urge the HHS to engage in meaningful government-to-government consultation with Tribal nations to prevent future disruptions.”

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About Urban Indian Health Institute:

Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI) is a Public Health Authority and one of 12 Tribal Epidemiology Centers in the country. It conducts research and evaluation, collects and analyzes data, and provides disease surveillance to strengthen the health of urban American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Learn more at uihi.org.