

# Creating the American Indian Health-Area Health Education Center

Saturday, February 18, 2023

Kim Russell, Director



ARIZONA ADVISORY  
COUNCIL ON INDIAN  
HEALTH CARE

# Mission Statement

The mission of the AACIHC is to advocate for increasing access to high quality health care programs for all American Indians in Arizona

# Vision Statement

The AACIHC strives to be the premier resource for Tribes and Urban Indians in Arizona on American Indian health care.



# PURPOSE

- The AACIHC is established to give tribal governments, tribal organizations and urban Indian health care organizations in this state, representation in shaping Medicaid and health care policies and laws that impact the populations they serve.
  - Legislative Advocacy
  - Administrative Advocacy

# A.R.S. 36-2902.01

- A. The Arizona advisory council on Indian health care shall:
  - (c) Recommend and advocate tribal, state and federal policy and legislation that support the design and implementation of medical and public health care delivery and financing systems for tribes and urban Indian health organizations in this state.



# Tribal Convening

- In April 2012, Tribes and other stakeholders convened at the Arizona American Indian Pathways into Health Conference
  - to share successful health career pathway pilot models
  - to share ideas on how to increase the number of American Indians preparing for health professions
- Overall agreement to “Growing Our Own” Health care providers

# Strategies Identified

- Health Career Pathways Pipeline, Education to Employment
  - Creation of an assessment map
- Create a Statewide Strategic Plan
  - Coordination of resources and programs across agencies (Tribes, State, Federal)
- Statewide Advocacy
  - Prioritize the Issue



# AACIHC Strategic Plan

- In October 2017, the AACIHC updated their strategic plan
  - Goal: Expand the American Indian health care workforce.
  - Objective: Establish an Arizona American Indian Area Health Education Center



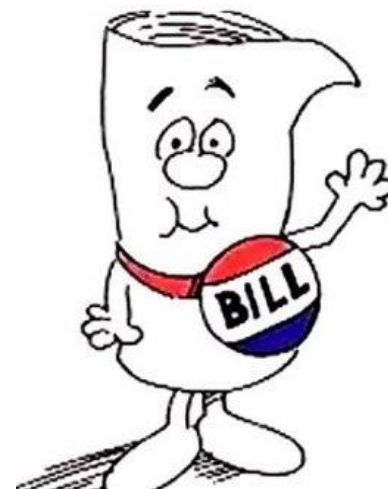
# Advocacy

- Fall to Winter 2018:
  - Informed Tribes and other organizations of AHEC initiative and secured support
  - Drafted bill language & Identified Prime Sponsor
  - AACIHC members and staff met with key tribal and state leadership and the Governor’s Office
- December 10, 2018
  - AACIHC passed Resolution 03-2018: “Support for the Creation of a 6th AHEC that Focuses on the Indian Health System”



## A.R.S. 15-1643. Arizona area health education system; centers; 5 governing boards; duties

- B. The system shall consist of ~~five~~SIX area health education centers administered by the director of the Arizona area health education system. Each center shall represent a geographic area with specified populations that the system determines currently lack services by the health care professions. **ONE CENTER SHALL FOCUS ON THE INDIAN HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM.**





# 2019 Legislative Session

- SB 1174 - Arizona health education centers; increase
- Prime Sponsor: Sen. Heather Carter (LD-15), Chair, Higher Education and Workforce Development (HEWD)
- SENATE:
  - Passed out of the HEWD Committee and Rules Committee
  - Passed unanimously out of the Senate
- HOUSE:
  - Passed out of the Education Committee
  - Died in the Rules Committee as it didn't receive a hearing.

# Advocacy

- Fall to Winter 2019:
  - Informed more Tribes and other organizations of 6<sup>th</sup> AHEC initiative and secured more support
  - Drafted bill language & Identified Prime Sponsor
  - AACIHC members and staff met with key tribal and state leadership and the Governor's Office



# 2020 Legislative Session

- HB 2296- Arizona health education centers; increase
- Prime Sponsor: Rep. T.J. Shope (LD-8)
- HOUSE:
  - Passed out of the Education Committee and Rules Committee
  - Passed unanimously out of the House
- SENATE:
  - Assigned to the Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee and Rules Committee
  - Died in the Senate as it didn't receive a hearing in either Committee





# More Advocacy and Support

- Resolutions
  - Navajo Nation, San Carlos Apache Tribe, San Carlos Apache Health Care Corporation, Inter Tribal Association of Arizona and others
  - Tribes/Organizations/Individuals signed into the Request to Speak System as being in support
  - Testimony
- Joint Tribal Consultation with Tribes to discuss 6th AHEC Initiative (U of A, AACIHC, and ADHS)
  - October 23, 2020



# 2021 Legislative Session

- HB 2294 dropped in House and SB 1301 dropped in Senate
- SB 1301 – Arizona health education centers; increase
- Prime Sponsor: Rep. T.J. Shope (LD-8)
- SENATE:
  - Assigned to the Education Committee and Rules Committee
  - Unanimously Passed the Senate
- HOUSE:
  - Assigned to the Education Committee and Rules Committee
  - Unanimously Passed the House

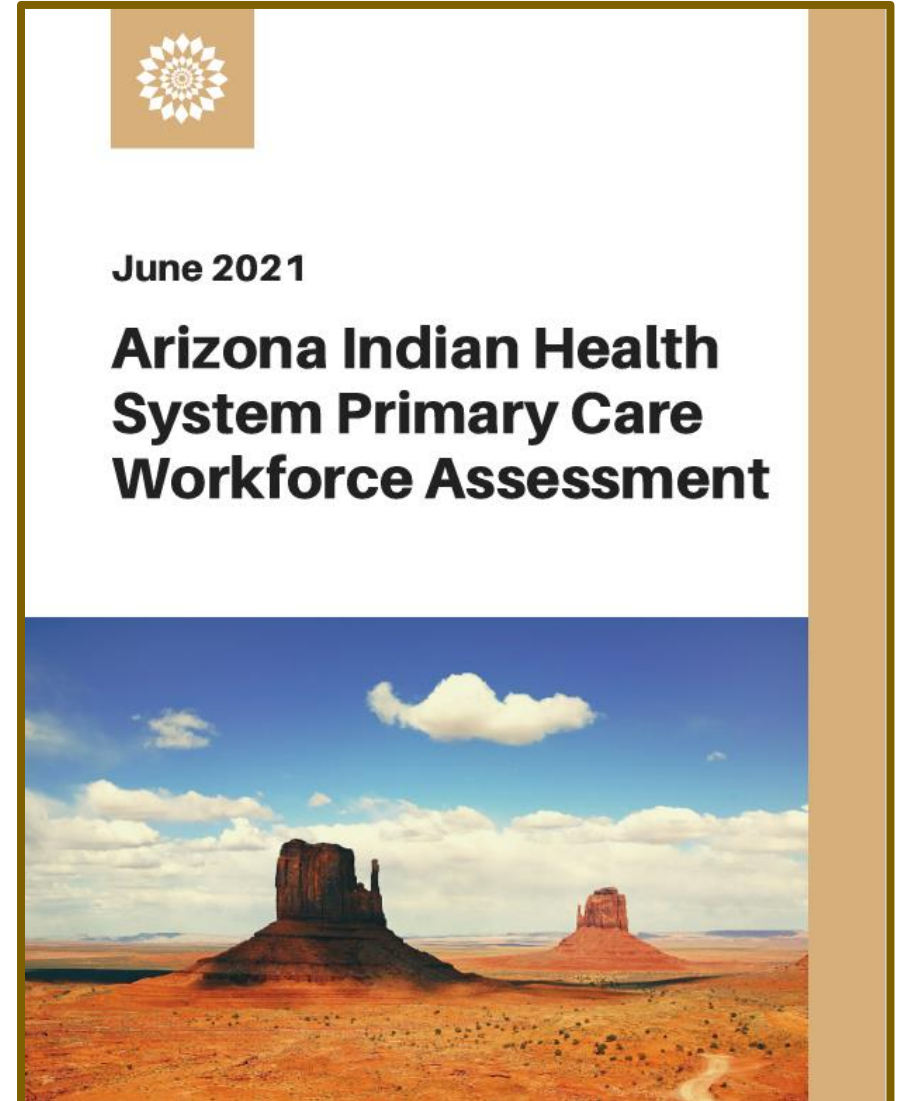
# 3<sup>rd</sup> Time's a Charm!!!





# Assessing the Indian Health System

- June 2021
- Commissioned an Arizona Indian Health System Primary Care Workforce Assessment
- Purpose: To assess the American Indian health system workforce challenges and opportunities across Arizona and is intended as an initial review





# Workforce Assessment Findings

- The **HPSA designations** for IHS, Tribal 638 and Urban (I/T/U) facilities have higher HPSA scores than the State of Arizona facilities:

	PRIMARY CARE	DENTAL	MENTAL HEALTH
Avg I/T/U facility score	19	20	17
Avg Statewide score	14	16	16
	Scores range from 13-21	Scores range from 14-24	Scores range from 10-21

- An additional 43.89 primary care doctors are needed to eliminate HPSAs of tribal areas.
- An additional 38.75 dentists are needed to eliminate tribal HPSAs of tribal areas.
- An additional 25.53 psychiatrists are needed to eliminate tribal HPSAs of tribal



# Recommendations for Future Study

- Conduct additional workforce surveys with IHS , Urban Indian Health System and tribal facilities, including assessing impact of obligated or temporary providers, providers planning to retire, and number of Medicaid claims. Include smaller tribes that do not have their own HPSAs in assessment.
- Assess other types of primary care providers, such as Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Midwives, Physician Assistants, Dental Therapists and other behavioral health professionals. Also explore the impact of telemedicine on delivery of primary care.



# Recommendations for Future Study

- Inventory successful initiatives and strategies, both within Arizona and nationally, that have effectively increased the health workforce serving American Indian populations. This could include pipeline programs, recruitment and retention programs, or other incentives.



## Standing up the 6<sup>th</sup> AHEC

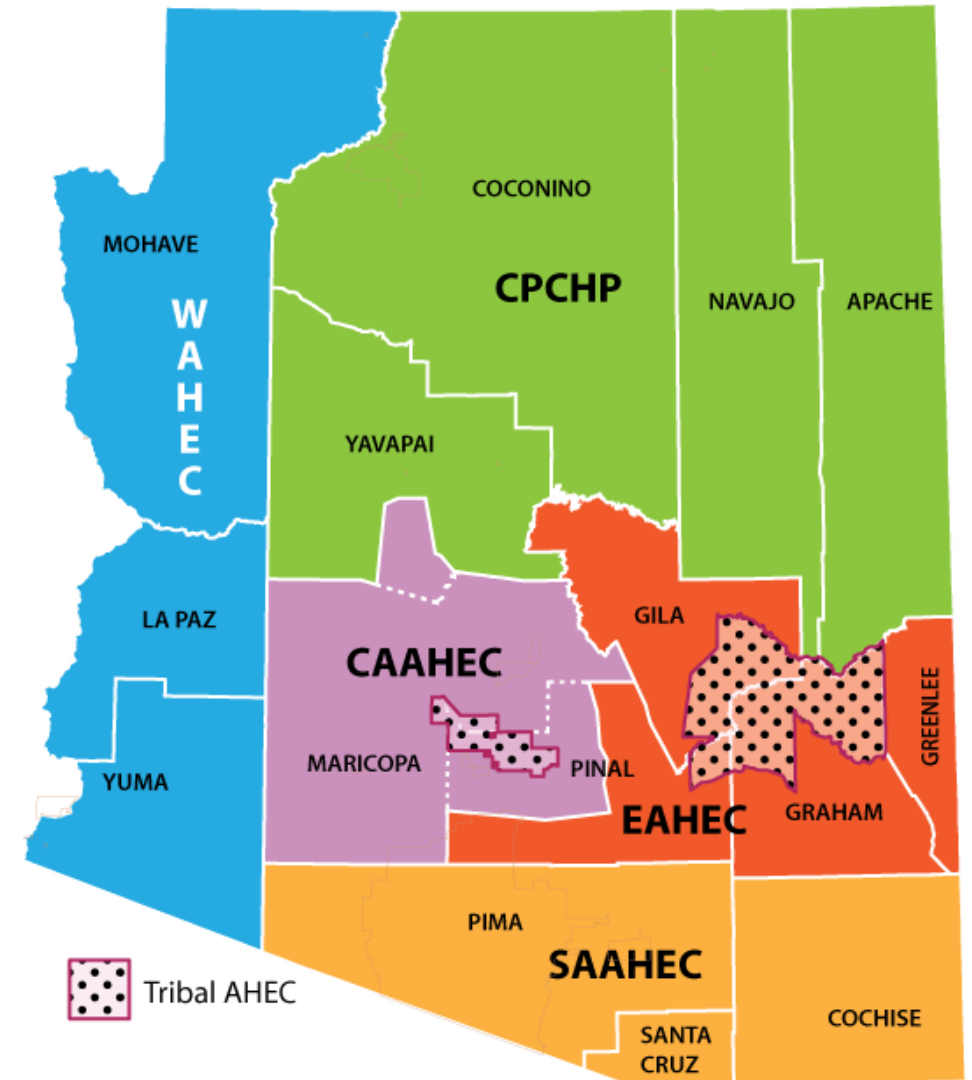
- March 2022- Grant Proposal Submitted to University of Arizona
- June 14, 2022- Awarded Contract
- Start Date: July 2022 & End Date: August 31, 2023
- Selected a Full time Director and Part-time staff





## American Indian Health - AHEC

- Gila River Health Care and
- San Carlos Apache Health Care
- Eastern Arizona AHEC (EAHEC)
- Central Arizona AHEC (CAAHEC)
- Colorado Plateau Center for Health Professionals (CPCHP)
- Southern Arizona AHEC (SAAHEC)
- Western Arizona AHEC (WAHEC)





## American Indian Health - AHEC STATEWIDE FOCUS

1. Community-based Experiential Training (CBET)
2. AHEC Scholars Community Immersion
3. Continuing Education for Health Professionals
4. 9th-12th grade and undergraduate student structured pipeline activities
5. K-8 grades unstructured pipeline activities
6. Community events on health-related topics
7. AIH-AHEC three-year strategic plan development





## Community Based Experiential Training

- AIH-AHEC has supported the Northern Arizona University American Indian Nursing program with travel stipends for their student's clinical rotation travel and expenses
- Tribal Collaborations: Gila River Health Care and San Carlos Apache Healthcare
  - AIH-AHEC is working with GRHC and SCAHC professional staff to secure student clinical rotations within medicine, nursing, pharmacy, physical therapy, speech therapy, podiatry and dentistry for undergraduate and graduate students



## Youth Pipeline

- K – 8th grade activities to introduce youth to healthcare careers
- 9 – 12th grade activities to introduce high school students to structured health activities and summer healthcare camps, assist with college/technical school placement
- Undergraduate clinical rotations and shadowing opportunities for students in healthcare careers
- Graduate student clinical placement and Scholars program for community immersion and orientation



## Continuing Professional Development

- AIH-AHEC facilitates continuing professional development for current healthcare providers working within Tribal facilities to assist them with staying current in their field in addition to working towards advanced training and certification
- AIH-AHEC is developing social media recruitment outreach to young and second career adults to introduce them to entry level healthcare careers with the hope that they will continue in the Tribal Healthcare workforce





## AIH – AHEC Student Comments

“It was an amazing experience to see how complex and fast paced the operating room is. My favorite part of the CBET experience was being able to see all the amazing American Indian healthcare providers in action. Seeing these providers influenced me greatly to provide the best care I can once I am a nurse. Overall, this was a great learning experience. I left with more confidence in navigating the hospital and being able to experience the patient heal both physically and mentally was amazing”

-K. M. Nursing Student, Tuba City Regional Health Care

“One of my favorite moments during my clinical experiences is speaking my native tongue, which is Navajo. There is a certain feeling of pride and accomplishment when I can mix my culture and nursing knowledge to provide patient care. I plan on going back and working in my own community when I graduate. Clinical experiences have helped me practice my Navajo language skills and also my nursing skills”

-T.L., Nursing Student, Tuba City Regional Health Care



The AIH-AHEC will support the  
“Grow Your Own”  
Strategy in all it’s  
programming and planning

A desert landscape featuring several tall saguaro cacti in the foreground and a range of rugged mountains in the background under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on the sky area.

Thank you!

Questions?

A decorative teal wavy border at the bottom of the slide.



# Contact Information

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