

# **Community Health Profile 2009 Denver Indian Health and Family Services Denver, CO**

## **Urban Indian Health Institute**

### **Seattle Indian Health Board**

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/LtGovGarcia/CBON/1251599861222>

The Denver Indian Health and Family Services, Denver, Colorado, is working hard to address the horrifying statistics in this report. For example, the Infant Mortality Rate is 15.2 out of every 1,000 live births - more than double that reported in the general population at 5.8. To combat this, the Denver Indian Health and Family Services entered into a partnership with a local private hospital to provide pre-natal, delivery and post-natal services to urban American Indians.

Among AI/AN living in the Denver Metro Area, 26.1% report they were unable to see a doctor in the past year because of cost issues compared with 11.6% of the general population.

A continuing problem is the distribution of monies by the federal government to states with the expectation/requirement that a portion of those monies be spent on Indian Tribes in the State and urban Indians. It is uncertain which states are not passing such monies on to Indian Tribes in the State and urban Indian Health Clinics. In Colorado, there was no method or formula to guide the distribution process and counties were concerned that if distribution was made to Indian Tribes in the State and urban Indian Health Clinics, it would reduce the amount they receive.

The US HHS Tribal Advisory Committee expressed its concern on this matter as well.

It constitutes a breach of the fiduciary duty of the US HHS in not seeing that the monies are being appropriately used by the State for Indian Tribes in the State and urban Indian Health Clinics. The sad thing is the monies are in areas most critical to Tribes and urban Indians - diabetes, alcoholism, substance abuse, etc.

In addition, Colorado is statutorily required to appropriately allocate this funding:

CRS 24-44-103. Duties of commission.

(1) It is the duty of the commission:

- (a) To coordinate intergovernmental dealings between tribal governments and this state;
- (b) To investigate the needs of Indians of this state and to provide technical assistance in the preparation of plans for the alleviation of such needs;
- (c) To cooperate with and secure the assistance of the local, state, and federal governments or any agencies thereof in formulating and coordinating programs regarding Indian affairs adopted or planned by the federal government so that the full benefit of such programs will accrue to the Indians of this state.