

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Introduces bipartisan, bicameral bill to increase Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness

Posted on Friday, Apr 1, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – United States Senator Tammy Baldwin joined the bipartisan, bicameral *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act*, legislation that would ensure that Tribes have equal access to funding through the CDC to prepare for public health emergencies. Currently, Tribal Nations are not eligible to apply for the CDC's Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) cooperative agreement program that provides grants to state and local public health departments to help them prepare for emergencies. This bill would change that.

The CDC PHEP program is a critical source of funding for eligible state, local, and territorial public health departments, helping them build and strengthen their ability to respond to public health threats and associated emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Many heavily rely on these funds to meet needs related to staffing, supply procurement and management, planning, and training, but under the current program, no Tribal public health departments are able to apply for these funds.

“For COVID-19, and future pandemics, Tribal Nations deserve access to the same public health resources to keep their communities safe that our state and local governments have access to,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “This bipartisan legislation will address just that, helping support our Native communities combat public health emergencies and reduce the persistent health inequities in Indian Country.”

“For decades, states have received federal public health funding to help them prepare for and respond to public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic, while tribal governments have had to fend for themselves despite the already significant health disparities in our communities,” **said Tehassi Hill, Chairman of the Oneida Nation.** “This bill recognizes the role tribal governments have in protecting the health of our people and is an important step towards honoring the federal trust responsibility to tribes. The Oneida Nation is very thankful for Sen. Baldwin’s continued leadership on this and other efforts to support tribal governments.”

The *CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act* is led by Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Martin Heinrich (D-MN) and Representatives Ruben Gallego (D-AZ) and Tom Cole, Co-Chair of the Congressional Native American Caucus and Member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, (R-OK). Along with Senator Baldwin, the legislation is cosponsored by Senators Tina Smith (D-MN), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Bernie Sanders (I-VT).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on Indian Country, in part worsened by inequities in access to public health prevention and mitigation resources. While the Indian Health Service serves as the primary federal agency charged with providing health care in Indian Country, all federal agencies – including the CDC – share the requirement to fulfill the federal government’s trust and treaty obligations to Native Nations. The *CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act* would:

- Allow Tribal nations and Tribal organizations to apply directly to the CDC PHEP program;
- Require the CDC to fund at least ten Tribes for emergency preparedness and include a 5% Tribal set-aside of total CDC PHEP funds;
- Exempt Tribes from needing to match funds and waive many of the reporting requirements to minimize the administrative burden on Tribal Nations; and
- Require the CDC to consult with Tribal nations and Tribal organizations and allow the CDC to make certain modifications to the program to fit the needs of Tribal applicants.

The *CDC Tribal Public Health Security and Preparedness Act* is supported by the National Indian Health Board, the National Congress of American Indians, and the National Council of Urban Indian Health.

Full bill text is available [here](#).

A summary of the legislation is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).