

## OFFICE OF CONGRESSWOMAN NORMA J. TORRES

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### REPS. TORRES AND YOUNG INTRODUCE BILL TO RENEW SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS

WASHINGTON, DC – This week, Rep. Norma J. Torres (D-CA), Ranking Member on the Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs Subcommittee, and Rep. Don Young (R-AK) introduced the Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization Act of 2017, a bill that would renew the Special Diabetes Programs for Indians (SDPI) before it expires on September 30, 2017.

“Currently over 50% of adults in the American Indian/Alaska Native communities have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, and they are 177% more likely to die from the disease. It is critical that we renew SDPI, because this program has been helping to change these troubling statistics,” *said Rep. Torres*. “SDPI works, because it provides locally managed, culturally relevant services that have proven to be a strong return on federal investment by decreasing the likelihood of complications from this preventable disease. SDPI is transforming communities and saving lives, and we must continue to provide much-needed resources and support for this proven program.”

Congress established the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) in 1997 as part of the Balanced Budget Act to address the growing epidemic of Type II diabetes in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. American Indian and Alaska Native population have the highest rates of diagnosed diabetes among U.S. racial and ethnic groups, a rate that is nearly twice the rate in the general population. Through SDPI grants, the Indian Health Service (IHS), Indian Tribes, Tribal Organizations, and Urban Indian Organizations have set up diabetes programs to create an extensive support network that provides diabetes surveillance, health promotion, research translation, and other activities. SDPI is funded at a level of \$150 million per year and supports over 400 diabetes treatment and prevention programs in 40 states, and the results have been extraordinary.

“As a proud member of the Congressional Diabetes Caucus, I have long supported initiatives to improve diabetes research, education, and treatment,” *said Congressman Don Young*. “The SDPI is an extremely valuable program that provides Indian Health programs and tribal communities the resources needed to both prevent and treat diabetes. Diabetes prevention is essential to improving the health and well-being of all Americans, including Alaska Native and American Indians who have the highest prevalence of diabetes among all U.S. ethnic groups. I’m proud to join Representative Torres on this important legislation and look forward to seeing the reauthorization of this essential program.”

This legislation ensures that SDPI funded programs can continue and that lessons learned from these programs can be shared and replicated to keep Indian Country on a path to a diabetes-free future. The National Indian Health Board, the National Congress of American Indians, the Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee, and the Self-Governance Communication & Education Tribal Consortium have expressed support for this bill. Companion legislation to the Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization Act has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) where it is currently before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

The Special Diabetes Program for Indians Reauthorization Act of 2017 is cosponsored by Reps. Tom Cole (R-OK), Doug LaMalfa (R-CA), and Betty McCollum (D-MN). The text of the bill can be found [HERE](#).

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