



May 2026

# BAKERSFIELD AMERICAN INDIAN HEALTH PROJECT NEWSLETTER

## Advocacy in Action: Bakersfield American Indian Health Project (BAIHP) at the 2026 NCUIH Annual Conference and Hill Day

The BAIHP attended the 2026 National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) Annual Conference, which brings together Urban Indian Health Organizations from across the country to discuss healthcare policy updates, funding opportunities, and issues impacting Native communities.

A key component of the conference is Hill Day, where organizations meet directly with congressional leaders and staff to advocate for legislation and funding that strengthen healthcare access for American Indian and Alaska Native communities. These meetings provide an important opportunity to share community needs and elevate priorities at the federal level.

BAIHP extends gratitude to elected officials and community partners who continue to engage, learn, and support the health priorities of Native communities.

*Continued on page 2...*



## Top News

The 4th Annual Missing & Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) March at California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB), Bakersfield (CSUB) was held on Friday, May 8, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. It was open to the community.

## BAIHP Updates

On Friday, May 29th, BAIHP will host its 2026 Mental Health Awareness Event from 4 PM - 7:30 PM. It will be held at 501 40th St. bringing the community together for a day of culture, connection, and resources.



Bakersfield American  
**B·A·I·H·P**  
Indian Health Project

*Our Feathers Soaring Higher*

[www.BakersfieldAIHP.org](http://www.BakersfieldAIHP.org)

# Advocacy in Action: CEO Angel Galvez Interview

## **Q 1: Describe the NCUIH conference and how long have we been attending?**

The National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) hosts an annual conference that brings together Urban Indian Health Organizations from across the country to discuss legislation updates, funding opportunities, and healthcare issues affecting Native communities. Federal partners, including Indian Health Service and other healthcare agencies, provide updates, workshops, and training opportunities for organizations like BAIHP. The conference also gives organizations the opportunity to showcase successful programs, strengthen partnerships, and collaborate on improving Native health services nationwide.

## **Q 2: What is the significance of Hill Day?**

Hill Day is an important part of the NCUIH conference where Urban Indian Health Organizations meet with congressional representatives, senators, and staff members to advocate for legislation and funding that supports Indian Health Service and healthcare services for Native American and Alaska Native communities. These meetings give organizations the opportunity to share



the importance of their work, discuss healthcare needs in their communities, and encourage support for policies and funding that improve access to care for Native people.

## **Q 3: What was the primary ask that BAIHP had for legislators during Hill Day?**

During Hill Day, BAIHP asked legislators to support Medicaid reimbursement parity for Urban Indian Health Programs. While tribal 638 clinics receive higher federal reimbursement rates, programs like BAIHP must negotiate lower rates despite serving the same Native American communities. This point was emphasized by BAIHP, which is the only dedicated Urban Indian Health Program based in Kern County.

## **Q 4: If we receive the 100% FMAP reimbursement, what benefits would that provide for our clinic?**

If BAIHP received 100% FMAP (Federal Medical Assistance Percentage) reimbursement, it would provide greater financial stability and help sustain healthcare services for Native Americans in Kern County. The additional reimbursement could be reinvested into expanding care, especially in underserved rural communities where access to healthcare is limited. It would also strengthen BAIHP's ability to continue providing culturally responsive healthcare without relying as heavily on grant funding.

## **Q 5: What else would you like to add about the conference, Hill Day, or legislative priorities?**

BAIHP would like to express gratitude for the leaders who have taken the time to better understand the healthcare needs of American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Their continued support and willingness to learn about these priorities helps ensure that Native health remains part of important budget and policy conversations.

## Seeds of Hope: A Community Event by Sky's The Limit

BAIHP's Housing Manager, Mrs. ShaMekka Ludd, and Community Healthcare Worker II, Mrs. Estella Suarez, attended the Family Anthem: Seed of Hope event hosted by Sky's The Limit Institute of Wellness on April 24th in downtown Bakersfield.

The public, no-cost event provided a wide range of essential services, including portable showers, barber services, clothing distribution, food, and access to community resources. Designed to support individuals and families in need, the outreach effort emphasized accessibility, compassion, and dignity.

Ludd and Suarez participated on behalf of the Bakersfield American Indian Health Project (BAIHP) as volunteers, joining other organizations and community members in service.

Upon learning of their interest in participating, event organizer Rick Shaw, Business Manager for Sky's The Limit,



welcomed BAIHP and ensured they had space to engage with attendees.

What set the event apart, according to Ludd, was its participant-centered approach. Rather than distributing pre-selected items, attendees were given the opportunity to choose what they needed most.

This approach not only addressed individual circumstances more effectively but also reinforced dignity, autonomy, and the importance of treating people with compassion and respect.

"The norm is, if an organization is giving away free items, they give participants what they think they need," Ludd said. "At this event, people were able to choose what they wanted or needed, which created a more respectful and meaningful experience."

Ludd noted that the event was well-organized and supported by a team of friendly and compassionate staff and volunteers. Participants, in turn, expressed gratitude and appreciation throughout the day.

"The participants were polite and thankful, often saying 'Thank you' and 'God bless you,'" she said.

The Family Anthem: Seed of Hope event is part of an ongoing series of outreach efforts aimed at uplifting the Bakersfield community through both practical support and a message of hope and empowerment.

## Save the Date: 27th Annual Elder Abuse Prevention Conference

**KERN COUNTY**  
AGING & ADULT SERVICES

### 27TH ANNUAL ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

Theme: *Between Independence and Intervention: The Capacity Dilemma*

**JUNE 11, 2026**  
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

**THE LUX EVENT CENTER**  
4203 GOSFORD ROAD  
BAKERSFIELD, CA 93313

**ELDER AND DEPENDENT ADULT ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH**

**Key Note Speakers:**

**Kendra Kuehn**  
International Association  
for Indigenous Aging

**Tony Chicotel**  
California Advocates for  
Nursing Home Reform

**REGISTER ONLINE NOW!**

[HTTPS://WWW.VELOCITYPAYMENT.COM/CLIENT/KERNAGING/EVENTS/INDEX.HTML](https://www.velocitypayment.com/client/kernaging/events/index.html)

**\$55.00 EARLY REGISTRATION THROUGH MAY 22, 2026**  
**\$65.00 REGULAR REGISTRATION THROUGH JUNE 3, 2026**

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT LAURA JUAREZ AT  
661-868-1052 OR VIA EMAIL: [JUAREZLAU@KERNCOUNTY.COM](mailto:JUAREZLAU@KERNCOUNTY.COM)

The 27th Annual Elder Abuse Prevention Conference will take place on June 11, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The conference theme is “Between Independence and Intervention: The Capacity Dilemma.” This important event will be held at The Lux Event Center, located at 4203 Gosford Road in Bakersfield, California.

Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from several experienced and knowledgeable speakers in the field of elder advocacy and behavioral health. Featured speakers include: Kendra Kuehn from the International Association for Indigenous Aging, and Tony Chicotel from California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform.

Register online now to reserve your spot. For additional information, contact Laura Juarez at 661-868-1052 or by email at [JuarezLau@Kerncounty.com](mailto:JuarezLau@Kerncounty.com).



## Strengthening Mind, Body, and Spirit

Many Native communities have long understood the importance of caring for the mind, body, and spirit together. Taking time each day to breathe deeply, pray, meditate, or spend quiet moments in nature can help reduce stress and restore balance.

Connecting with family, elders, and community members reminds us that we are never alone in our struggles. Traditional practices such as storytelling, drumming, singing, beading, and dancing can strengthen emotional wellness and cultural identity.

It is also important to make time for rest, healthy meals, and regular movement to support overall mental health. When feelings of sadness, anxiety, or loneliness become overwhelming, reaching out for support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Talking with trusted friends, spiritual leaders, or mental health professionals can help begin the healing journey. Practicing gratitude and honoring our ancestors can bring comfort and resilience during difficult times.

By supporting one another and keeping our traditions strong, we help create healthier futures for the next generations.



## BAIHP Events in Shafter

On May 3rd, BAIHP tabled at the El Día del Niño/Cinco de Mayo event in Shafter, hosted by the La Colonia Organization. Family Advocate Evelyn shared informational flyers about BAIHP services and distributed fidget toys, colored pencils, and other BAIHP merchandise. The event celebrated children and recognized Cinco de Mayo through raffles, activities, and giveaways for families.

Community members from Shafter showed strong interest in learning more about BAIHP and asked questions about possible Native ancestry and tribal enrollment. Our Family Advocate assisted one community member with contacting her tribe to discuss the enrollment process. In addition, local school counselors expressed interest in BAIHP service presentations for students.

## KCSOS Event

On May 5th, BAIHP was invited to KCSOS's Foster Youth and Homeless Liaison Meeting to present information about the services provided by our clinic.

Prior to the start of the meeting, BAIHP offered a smudging ceremony and gifted necklace kits to attendees. Johnny Delgado, Evelyn Ballengee, Shamekka Ludd, Ruben Alonzo, and Cheyenna Bond presented on behalf of BAIHP.

BAIHP also provided folders containing information about our weekly activities, housing resources, and a BAIHP brochure.

In addition, KCSOS discussed the Hop Skip Drive program for foster and homeless youth, shared information about college and career workshops, and provided dates for STEAM Summer Camps for foster youth in grades 3–6. The camps will be held in Bakersfield from June 22–July 10 and in East Kern from July 20–July 31.

# Summer Fruit Smoothie

### Ingredients

1. Fresh blueberries - **1 cup**
2. Chopped fresh strawberries - **1 cup**
3. Peaches (peeled, seeded and chopped) - **2**
4. Peach flavored Greek style yogurt (non-fat) - **6 oz**
5. Almond milk (unsweetened) - **1 cup**
6. Ground flax seed - **2 tbsp**
7. Ice - **1/2 cup**

Author: American Diabetes Association  
 Prep Time: 5 min.  
 Cook Time: 0 min.  
 Servings: 4



### Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth Enjoy!



## Employee Spotlight

This month, we recognize Amber Fung, Medical Assistant at BAIHP. From the start, she demonstrated motivation, confidence, and a strong willingness to collaborate. She is consistently helpful,



shares ideas, and approaches her role with a positive, solution-focused mindset.

Her friendly, engaging demeanor and upbeat attitude make a meaningful contribution to team morale.



Subscribe to our Newsletter

Donate to BAIHP

## MMIP Event at Bakersfield College

On May 5th, BAIHP was invited to attend a Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) event at Bakersfield College hosted by the First Renegades Student Organization and the Native American Student Support and Success Program (NASSSP).

It was a powerful and emotional event that shared many of the horrors of MMIP statistics through video, discussion, and a presentation by our Tribal Liaison, Tara Gray. BAIHP Cultural Coordinator, Jesse Behill and Community Outreach Specialist, Lawrence Salcido offered a prayer song to start the event then joined with the Eagle Heart Drummers to sing and pray as a group.

The event concluded with various activities from writing heartfelt messages for those missing, creating bracelets, or journaling. BAIHP was deeply honored to be invited to this event.



## Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI)

Diabetes Education Classes are now being offered for individuals living with diabetes or prediabetes, as well as family members and caregivers who want to learn more about supporting healthy living.

These six comprehensive classes will provide valuable education on managing diabetes, preventing complications, and improving overall wellness, all led by our Family Nurse Practitioner. Participants will also have the chance to earn prizes throughout the program, including raffle prizes at each class, participation gifts, and additional rewards for completing their Health Passport.

Those who complete the full program will receive a Frozen Yogurt Maker and be entered into the grand prize raffle for a Schwinn Adult Trike during the final class. Classes will take place from 1:30–3:00 PM on May 26, June 23, July 28, August 25, September 22, and October 27 at 501 40th St, Bakersfield, CA 93301.

Space is limited to only 10 participants and enrollment priority will be given to people with Type 2 diabetes, followed by individuals with prediabetes, and then family members and caregivers. To register or learn more, call 661-327-4030 or sign up in person at 501 40th St, Bakersfield, CA 93301.



### Happy Birthday to BAIHP Staff for May!

Jorge Camacho (Not pictured, May 20), Noah Alavarez (May 28), Sarah Gilani (May 28), Sabrina Heinze (May 28)

501 40th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301  
 12308 Mountain Mesa Road, Lake Isabella, CA 93240

@TheBAIHP @BAIHP @BakersfieldAmeI