NICOA Conference—Washington Update

Bob Blancato – September 13, 2018
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Introduction

• Honor to be invited back to NICOA. Happy 42\textsuperscript{nd} anniversary

• Salute the work and advocacy of Randella Bluehouse—she is respected and effective. Becky and Cheryl thank you too.

• My friend James De La Cruz—a fighter who never stops

• Had the distinct pleasure of joining James at a very emotional event in D.C. for the 40\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Title VI program last month.

• Milestone—time to measure what was done but also what is left to do and answer is—a lot
Numbers of Importance

• Currently about 246,000 AI/AN elders in the US: 566 recognized tribes
• Life expectancy for men and women lower than national average
• Numbers of concern: 25 percent poverty rate, 33 percent with no health insurance, 16.8 percent disability rate among elders
• Future growth points to an 82 percent increase in AI/AN by 2030
• 24 percent on Medicaid—increase helped by ACA
• Title VI nutrition/SS grants awarded to 254 tribal orgs (representing over 400 tribes) and 2 Native Hawaiian orgs
  • Congregate and home-delivered meals combined: 4.8 million meals per year
  • In-home services: 1.2 million units of service per year
Washington Update

• My job is to provide an update on what is going on in D.C.
• Well we are now in day 600 of the Trump Presidency
• Never been a dull moment since noon on January 20, 2017
• And not likely to change
• Voters will take center stage in fewer than 2 months when the mid-term elections take place
  • All of the House and 1/3 of Senate
  • Scenarios abound about who is the majority and what it will mean
• But I want to talk about the status of some issues that are active and could also be impacted
Our Advice...

- Over time, the counsel we provide is you don’t panic and you never get complacent—but you do educate and inform!

- And you must vote—since 100 million did not in 2016
Spending: Today and Tomorrow

- We are currently in the final month of FY18 with FY 2019 starting on October 1
- Wild year with a good ending
- Initial budget proposal sent shock waves with its call to eliminate funding for Senior Corps, LIHEAP, CDBG, and Legal Services (to name a few)
- But panic was not warranted at the start:
  - Obama and Bush II sent 16 combined budgets to Congress
  - None ever approved as submitted
  - Same fate for President Trump’s first budget
Wooly to Wonderful!

- Wooly replaced wild later in year
  - 5 short term funding bills and then 2 short government shutdowns
- Then the wonderful
  - 2 year bipartisan budget agreement signed by the President with genuine increases for both defense and non defense program
  - First year of agreement the FY we are now in (2018)
  - All of the proposed program eliminations were rejected by Congress, ending up with
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>FY17 Final</th>
<th>FY18 Final</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OAA VI Native Americans Nutrition/SS</td>
<td>$31.2 million</td>
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<td>OAA VI Native Americans Caregiver Support</td>
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<td>Indian Health Service</td>
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<td>$5.537 billion</td>
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<td>OAA Title IIIC Nutrition</td>
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<td>$896.7 million</td>
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<td>OAA Title IIIB HCBS</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAA Title V SCSEP</td>
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<td>Family Caregiver Support Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comm. Services Block Grant (CSBG)</td>
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<td>Comm. Develop. Block Grant (CDBG)</td>
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<td>Social Services Block Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIHEAP (Home Energy Assistance)</td>
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<td>$3.64 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elder Justice Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHIP (Medicare Assisters)</td>
<td>$47.1 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Corps</td>
<td>$202.1 million</td>
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**FY 2019**

- Now we move to FY 2019: best spin—looks like we maintain the good fortune from this year into next
- Almost all the programs that got the increases this year will likely maintain the higher funding level through Sept 30, 2019
- Key is that the increase is to the base funding level vs. being a one time bump.
- FY 2019 to date:
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Status of the ACA

• ACA—American Conversation Act
• All three branches of government involved, especially judicial
• Remains the law of land (except individual mandate)
• Congress cannot repeal and replace
• Administration will try using executive actions
• Texas court case will be important
• Protection of persons with pre-existing conditions a powerful political issue going into November
Medicare and ACA

• Great reforms to Medicare in ACA never challenged, even in 2018
• Helped by President Trump promise not to touch Medicare
  • In a good place for now
• ACA reforms:
  • Paying for outcomes not volume
  • Lowering hospital readmissions
  • Expansion of preventive benefits
  • Closing of donut hole under Part D now by 2019
• All helping beneficiaries, all under traditional Medicare
• Added ten years of solvency to Medicare
Medicare Advantage

• New activity in Medicare Advantage; administration policies helping to promote MA
  • Offering those who enroll more choices
  • As a result, has seen a lot of growth (now 1/3 of Medicare enrollees on MA)
• We all watch the work of CMS in expanding the definition of “supplemental benefits”
  • CMS has finalized the idea, with benefits being available next year
  • Supplemental benefits to help beneficiaries with daily activities; services to be reimbursed for first time under MA
    • Will this include nutrition?
• Going forward, the question is—how much farther do we go?
• And what will the major rule on Medicare Part D due in Sept look like?
• NOT in future: Medicare going to voucher program
Medicaid

- Lot of action to start the year—lot more to come
- Medicaid now bigger than Medicare. Important to AI and AN; 24 percent in program
- Maintaining Medicaid expansion provisions from ACA allowed new states like VA to expand, bringing total to 33 states (and DC)
- Administration making important changes using their powers to approve state waivers and make policy
  - Most noteworthy—new work requirements
  - But limits also—Admin says will not support requests to impose lifetime limits for coverage
  - And courts are weighing in such as knocking out Kentucky work requirements
Still to Come…

• Block grant?
• Per capita spending limit?
• Both would require Congressional action
• One thing to celebrate—Medicaid now spends more on HCBS than institutional care for the first time in history!
• Good trend; needs to continue
Lightning Round

• Farm Bill
  • Future of SNAP
  • Casey/Collins bill on Commodity Supplemental Food Program
• Social Security—all quiet—a good thing, but for how long?
• RAISE Family Caregivers Act signed into law by the President
  • AARP led this fight
  • First time national strategy for helping family caregivers
  • Key development: naming of Commission (AI/AN should be represented)
Lightning Round (cont.)

- CHRONIC Care Act
  - Passed as part of the FY18 omnibus bill signed into law by the President
  - Codifies the MA supplemental benefits, among other improvements to MA

- Casey/Collins: Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act
  - Signed into law this month by the President
  - Will create a federal task force to set up a one-stop shop of resources for grandparents raising grandchildren
  - Currently at least 2.5 million grandparents raising grandchildren in the US
  - Will consider needs of AI/AN (specifically in the law)

- Other bills introduced impacting AI/AN: funding for veterans’ nursing homes in Indian Country, tribal broadband access, reauthorization of special diabetes prevention program
Elder Justice

- Menace of elder abuse in America continues
  - Of the general population of older adults, one in 10 will be victims
  - To date, a large-scale, population-based prevalence study of Native elder abuse or neglect has not been carried out
  - At least $2.9 billion stolen each year
  - FBI report showed that 50,000 people over 60 lost $342.5 million in 2017 to internet fraud and scams
- As Natl. Coordinator of the EJC, we are working in a bipartisan fashion for solutions
- Led effort to pass Elder Justice Act in 2010 and have secured $34 million in appropriated funding
  - Includes funding for National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative out of UND; part of the Elder Justice Innovation Grants; working on projects with individual tribes and for the community as a whole
Elder Justice and the Trump Administration

- We commend the work to date of this Administration
- Have made elder abuse a law and order issue
  - Elder Fraud Sweep: rounded up 250 defendants who had stolen half a billion dollars in total from older adults
  - Another smaller ring busted in NY which had a mass mailing fraud scheme that netted them $30 million just for 3 people
- Calling for funding related to opioid abuse and elder abuse: asking that specific resources go to the aging network, APS, ombudsman, law enforcement and others to develop plans for coordination, collaboration, data collection and training
  - A serious issue for Indian Country: example: AI/AN suffer the highest per capita rate of opioid overdoses
Elder Justice (cont.)

• Led effort to secure passage of Grassley-Blumenthal bill, Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act

• Key provision you will feel at home: elder justice coordinators in all 94 federal judicial districts

• Also led effort to prevent elimination of the SSBG, the main funding source for Adult Protective Services
Older Americans Act: Today and Tomorrow

- Program in a quiet period
- President chose a great head of ACL/AOA in Lance Robertson
- Focus has been on funding
  - Overall increase of $138 million for Act; largest since 2009
- Up for renewal in 2019
  - Critical time in its history
  - Needs to build on what it does well but see changing landscape, including rise of managed care
Future of the Act

• Three Fs
• Funding
  • Playing catch-up—federal funding increases when value proposition of Act and what it saves Medicaid is told locally then data and evidence prove it
  • Title VI programs in particular need money for infrastructure
  • Title VI programs also can form closer partnerships with Medicaid and private partners to help fill in funding gaps for now
• Flexibility:
  • Program operates best at level closest to older adult—local level—need to bolster local decision-making
Future of the Act (cont.)

• Foresight:
  • Anyone drive a 53 year old car?
  • OAA must look hard at its future and its ability to draw those at 60 as it does those who are 80
    • Make senior centers wellness and activity centers
    • Aim to improve food choices
    • Make family caregiver program reach more people
    • Make cultural competency a must in how and where programs are located and services delivered
Closing

• Mission of NICOA relevant today as in 1976—To advocate for improved comprehensive health, social services and economic well being of American Indians and Alaskan natives.

• You as NICOA members and supporters support and advance the mission

• It’s one thing to say you are making a difference

• It’s another when you actually are

• That is each and every one of you

• Thank you for what you do!

• Let me close with an invitation to an event not far from here.
All Aboard!
for the 2019
NANASp Annual
Conference
May 15-17, 2019

Get ready to embark on a conference experience like no other on the historic Queen Mary in Long Beach, CA

Stay tuned for more details; visit www.nanasp.org for more information coming soon
Resources

• NANASP Conference: https://nanasp.org/NANASP2019Conference
• n4a report on Title VI: https://www.n4a.org/Files/Title%20VI%20Survey/Title%20VI%20Program%20Survey_508.pdf
• Elder Justice Coalition: www.elderjusticecoalition.com
• Town Hall Project: https://townhallproject.com/
• Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121
• rblancato@matzblancato.com