

National Indian Health Board



Anthony (A.C.) Locklear II, J.D.
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A.C. Locklear, J.D. is a nationally recognized leader in Tribal health policy, federal Indian law, and nonprofit governance, serving as Chief Executive Officer of the National Indian Health Board (NIHB). NIHB serves as the unified voice of Tribal Nations on health policy, working to strengthen Tribal sovereignty, advance Tribal health systems, and secure the resources necessary to improve the health and well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples.

As CEO, A.C. provides executive leadership for NIHB, guiding its national advocacy, policy development, and convening power at the intersection of Tribal sovereignty, public health, and federal policy. Since assuming executive leadership, he has led a comprehensive organizational transformation—strengthening governance and compliance, modernizing internal systems, and positioning NIHB for long-term sustainability, growth, and national influence.



Under his leadership, NIHB has successfully renewed and expanded major federal cooperative agreements totaling more than \$7 million, including securing the first increase to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services cooperative agreement in over a decade. He has overseen the remediation of longstanding financial and operational challenges, implemented modern financial management systems and controls, restructured departments to improve accountability and performance, and launched NIHB's first-ever dedicated development and philanthropic engagement function. He has also played a central role in expanding the National Tribal Health Conference, elevating it as the largest and premier convening of its kind for Tribal health leadership, policy, and innovation.

A.C. is a leading national authority on Tribal health and public health policy and a recognized expert in Tribal public health. Prior to becoming CEO, he served as NIHB's Director of Federal Relations, where he led federal budget and regulatory advocacy, supported Tribal consultation across multiple federal agencies, and worked closely with Tribal leaders, Congress, and the Administration to advance policies affecting Indian Health Service, Tribal, and Urban Indian health programs. His policy leadership has contributed to landmark federal outcomes, including securing advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service, helping achieve the first major increase to the Special Diabetes Program for Indians in over a decade, and advancing Tribal exemptions and protections within major federal legislative and administrative actions.

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A.C. has provided executive leadership during periods of significant federal disruption, including government shutdowns, workforce reductions, and administrative transitions. During these moments, he worked directly with Tribal leaders, national Native organizations, and senior federal officials to protect Tribal health funding, prevent destabilizing workforce losses within the Indian Health Service, and ensure continuity of critical Tribal programs. He was instrumental in convening national Native organizations to form and align the Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty, strengthening coordinated strategy to defend Tribal rights, authorities, and health priorities during rapidly changing federal conditions.

In addition to his role at NIHB, A.C. serves in national advisory and governance capacities shaping public health and Tribal policy at the highest levels. He serves in cross-sector national public health advisory roles addressing behavioral health, health systems modernization, and population health strategy, including through the Common Health Coalition. He also holds federal advisory roles related to suicide prevention and health system modernization.

A.C. is a frequent national spokesperson on Tribal health, Indigenous determinants of health, and federal policy. He has regularly testified before key congressional committees, including the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the House Committee on Natural Resources, and his expertise has been featured in national and international media outlets including CNN, Politico, Axios, and ICT News. He has also spoken internationally, including delivering an intervention at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, calling for global accountability and systems transformation to address persistent Indigenous health inequities.

In recognition of his leadership and impact, A.C. was selected as a National Fellow in the Rockwood Leadership Institute's *Leading from the Inside Out* yearlong fellowship, a highly selective executive leadership program for experienced social change leaders shaping complex systems at the national level.

A citizen of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, A.C. is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of North Carolina School of Law. His leadership is grounded in a commitment to Tribal self-determination, public service, and the responsibility to strengthen health systems for future generations of Native people.