

Unveiling Arizona's Sober Living Fraud Scandal

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Class-action lawsuits expose widespread exploitation of nearly 7,000 Native Americans and demand accountability from state agencies.

Last month, a 125 page class-action complaint was filed on behalf of nearly 7,000 Native Americans in Arizona who were victims of the ongoing sober living fraud scandal across the state. This complaint was filed against the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). There was also a 232-page class-action which does not specify a dollar amount. It highlights, however, how the indigenous population in Arizona was disproportionately impacted. The suit breaks those who were victimized into four subclasses: wrongful death, injury, displacement, and services not rendered.

"We want accountability," said Reva Stewart, founder of the Phoenix-based Turtle Island Women Warriors, a group that helps people victimized by the schemes. "People are still missing. And we have so many John Does and Jane Does who were thrown out of these (sober living) homes without identification."

AHCCCS and ADHS have released a joint statement:

"AHCCCS and ADHS are unable to comment on the substance of pending litigation. Addressing behavioral health fraud remains at the forefront of our efforts. Governor Hobbs and State Agencies have acknowledged the pain and suffering associated with behavioral health fraud and the significant impact on Tribal nations in Arizona. The Hobbs administration has taken swift action against the fraudulent providers, prioritized an emergency humanitarian response, and continues to prioritize operational reform in collaboration with law enforcement and Tribal partners.

Our focus remains protecting the populations we serve, ensuring that Arizonans receive the vital care and services they need, and eliminating fraud."