

# SONOSKY

SONOSKY, CHAMBERS, SACHSE, ENDRESON & PERRY, LLP

• A NATIONAL LAW FIRM DEVOTED TO REPRESENTING NATIVE AMERICAN INTERESTS •

## PRESS RELEASE

### SONOSKY CHAMBERS INDIAN RIGHTS FIRM CREATES \$3.5 MILLION INDIAN HEALTH CARE FUND

WASHINGTON, DC (April 14, 2015) The law firm of Sonosky Chambers Sachse Endreson & Perry is pleased to announce the launch of a \$3.5 million charitable giving program to support the delivery of health care in Native American communities. Initial commitments have been made to five Tribes and tribal organizations totaling \$1.5 million, and additional donations will be announced in the coming months.

The announcement comes as the Sonosky Chambers firm closes in on 40 years representing Alaska Native and American Indian interests. During that time, a significant portion of the firm's representation has involved work with dozens of tribally-controlled health care systems across the country from Alaska to Maine. For decades the firm has helped Tribes to build hospitals and clinics, to take over and manage massive federal health care operations, and to vindicate tribal rights under contracts with the United States.

Three times these tribal contracting matters have gone before the Supreme Court. In 2005, partner Lloyd Miller prevailed in historic Supreme Court litigation against the U. S. Indian Health Service (IHS): in Cherokee Nation & Shoshone-Paiute Tribes v. Leavitt, 631 U.S. 543, the Court unanimously held IHS liable for failing to honor contractual commitments made to Indian Tribes operating government hospitals and clinics serving tribal communities. In 2012, Miller secured a second victory against IHS when the Supreme Court summarily reversed a Federal Circuit ruling which had favored the government. Arctic Slope Native Ass'n, Ltd. v. Sebelius, 133 S. Ct. 22 (2012). The Arctic Slope victory built on another 2012 decision that Miller and two other firms secured in a similar case against the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Salazar v. Ramah Navajo Chapter, 132 S. Ct. 218 (2012), involving contracted law enforcement, education and other services administered on Indian reservations.

In the wake of these litigations, the Sonosky Chambers firm has settled 56 Indian tribal cases against IHS and recovered over \$750 million. Some claims reached back 20 years and had long been on hold pending the outcome of the Arctic and Ramah cases. Additional cases are pending, as is the Ramah class action litigation against the BIA. Partner Lloyd Miller called the Supreme Court's multiple reversals of lower court rulings "a stunning vindication of the Tribes' claims that they had been cheated for decades in a way that never would have been tolerated had the contracts been with routine procurement contractors." Miller also credited the National Defense Industrial Association and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for assisting as amicus parties in the litigations: "Their support helped the Court appreciate that the government's position threatened to seriously erode the integrity of all government contracting activities, and not just contracts with Indian Tribes."

Partner Lloyd Miller explained that the conclusion of the contract cases comes at a momentous time in the firm's history: "As the firm approaches our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we want to pause and say thank you for the privilege of working together with tribal communities to advance and improve Native American health care within the critical framework of tribal self-governance and self-determination. And to underscore our deep appreciation for the honor of working with Indian Country, today we formally announce a series of specific challenge grants to support a number of key capital projects underway across the country." The first five grants will support:

the new 202-bed Patient and Family Housing Facility under construction by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and serving Alaska's 235 Tribes and 147,000 Alaska Native people (\$450,000);

the new Durant Regional Medical Center under construction by the Choctaw Nation (\$200,000);

the new W.W. Hastings Outpatient Clinic under construction by the Cherokee Nation (\$200,000);

improvements in the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center and adjacent campus (\$200,000); and

the new Nuka Center under construction by the Southcentral Foundation in Anchorage, Alaska (\$450,000).

Additional grants will be announced in the coming months.

Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby said:

““For decades, this firm has worked tirelessly to support tribal self-determination and seek justice on issues close to the heart of the Chickasaw people. This generous donation is but one more indication of their dedication to bringing justice and a better life to Native Americans across the United States. On behalf of the Chickasaw people, it is my honor to express our heartfelt appreciation for their generosity.”

ANTHC President Andy Teuber said:

“The greatest risk to the health of Alaska Native people is not receiving the care they need when they need it. Community partners, like Sonosky, Chambers recognize the significance of this housing project, which diminishes the travel and cost barrier to health care access for our people. This generous donation at the start of the project is simply outstanding. For the nearly 60 percent of our patients who travel to Anchorage for medical services, the donation will directly improve the quality of their health care experience.” CEO Roald Helgeson added “We are deeply grateful for the leadership and contribution from Sonosky Chambers that recognizes the far-reaching impact that the Patient Housing project will have for our people.”

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill Baker said:

“Access to quality health care is the most pressing issue for the Cherokee Nation and Native people across the country. The Sonosky Chambers law firm has, for more than 25 years, provided stellar legal counsel in helping the Cherokee Nation secure our rightful contract support cost funding from the federal government. In addition, the firm is now contributing directly to the betterment of our people by donating \$200,000 toward the construction of our new medical facility in Tahlequah. I am proud that our longstanding partnership with Sonosky Chambers will assist us in improving the lives of generations of Cherokees by offering world-class health care. We are honored to work with a firm that shares our priorities in providing for our citizens.”

Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton said:

“It is an honor that Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Miller and Munson have selected Choctaw Nation to be a part of their challenge grant. We will use these dollars to better the health and lives of our tribal members.”

SCF President and CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb said:

“This is a historic contribution – the largest, single contribution from any one entity we have received. Words cannot express the deep appreciation we feel toward the people of the Sonosky Chambers firm and can only say *Quyanaa synaq* (big thank you) on behalf of the SCF family and the 65,000 people we serve.” Gottlieb added, “In true Lloyd spirit, he and his partners are challenging other organizations to join in this celebrated moment of giving by contributing to the matching grant.”

The Sonosky Chambers firm is a full-service firm devoted to representing Native American interests across the United States. The firm is based in Washington, D.C. with additional offices in Alaska (Anchorage and Juneau), San Diego and Albuquerque. Information on the firm is available at [www.sonosky.com](http://www.sonosky.com).

The firm serves as special and general counsel to Tribes and tribal organizations across the country, working in such areas as health care, tribal sovereignty, self-governance, land claims and water rights, hunting and fishing rights, labor law, gaming, infrastructure development, environmental and natural resource development law, and child welfare matters. The firm has an active trial and appellate litigation practice, and its partners have prevailed in several matters before the United States Supreme Court and appellate courts. The firm also has an active congressional and federal regulatory practice.

For additional information, feel free to contact partner Lloyd Miller at 907-229-6377, and to visit the Sonosky Chambers firm at [www.sonosky.com](http://www.sonosky.com). For comments from recent recipients, contact Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby at 580-436-7280, Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton at 405-924-8280, Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill Baker at 918-453-5000, ANTHC President and Chairman Andy Teuber at 907-942-1063, and SCF President and CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb at 907-229-9315.