



2020 Virtual Annual Convention

RESOLUTION #2020 – 29

“REQUESTS TO FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS TO COVID-19 VACCINE ”

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants rights secured under Indian Treaties, Executive Orders and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for national, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

WHEREAS, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California, and Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of ATNI; and

WHEREAS, federally recognized tribes are sovereign nations and the United States has a unique legal and political relationship with tribal governments established through and confirmed by the U.S. Constitution, treaties, federal statutes, executive orders, and judicial decisions; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the Novel Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization and on March 13, 2020 was declared a national emergency by the President; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) persons are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with many experiencing serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that there may be one or more approved COVID-19 vaccines available on a limited basis in early FY 2021 and an increase in approved vaccines potentially later in the year; and

WHEREAS, when AI/AN people hear the federal government talk about vaccines many experience historical trauma because of past harm done to tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, this trauma was triggered by the 2009-2010 H1N1 pandemic when some tribes did not receive their supply of vaccines and tribal members died; and

WHEREAS, in order to prevent any vaccine access issues, tribes must have the ability to access the vaccine from the federal government, the state(s) that border tribal lands, and local health jurisdictions without any limitations or restrictions and through a simple and streamlined process; and

WHEREAS, tribes have the authority to determine their service populations for COVID-19 vaccine administration notwithstanding the source (federal, state, and/or local) of the vaccine and must be provided with a simple and streamlined process to provide this information to the federal, state and/or local government; and

WHEREAS, federal, state and local governments may not have a process in place for tribes to: (1) request and access COVID-19 vaccine, and (2) share their service population and priority group numbers; and

WHEREAS, tribes must be provided with information on any vaccines that were tested on American Indians to assist them in making decisions in the event one or more vaccines is approved for use; and

WHEREAS, IHS and tribal facilities are often understaffed and under-resourced so any reporting requirements imposed on tribes for the vaccine must not be more burdensome than for state, local, and private healthcare providers; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that some vaccines may require storage at -60°C to -80°C so equipment or other support must be provided to tribes to ensure they have the capacity to receive and/or store the vaccine with special cold storage requirement; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, ATNI requests that, as to COVID-19 vaccine, federal, state and local governments and their agencies:

- Ensure tribes are recognized as sovereign nations in all COVID-19 vaccine guidance documents or other policies and referenced along with state and local governments; and
- Conduct meaningful tribal consultation prior to making any decisions that impact tribal governments and American Indians/Alaska Natives; and

- Ensure tribes have access to all three options to receive COVID-19 vaccine: federal, state, and local; and
- Ensure that tribally operated clinics have access to the same vaccines as Indian Health Service facilities; and
- Implement policies mandating that states and local jurisdictions are responsible for distributing and dispensing vaccine to tribes and have no authority over tribal governments' COVID-19 vaccine management and dispensing; and
- Provide a simple and streamlined process for tribes to request and access COVID-19 vaccine; and
- Honor tribes' authority to determine COVID-19 vaccine service populations and priority populations; and
- Provide a simple and streamlined process for tribes to share their service population and priority group numbers; and
- Provide tribes with the ability to choose vaccine product if more than one is available; and
- Provide information to tribes on vaccines that have been tested on American Indians, and that have proven to be effective or ineffective, to assist tribes in their decision making; and
- Ensure that tribes have the capacity to receive and/or store the vaccine with special cold storage requirement; and
- Ensure tribal reporting requirements are no more burdensome than for state, local, and private healthcare providers; and
- Prioritize onboarding tribes to information management systems required for COVID-19 Vaccine; and
- Ensure that tribes not be required to be included on VaccineFinder.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2020 Virtual Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Portland, Oregon, on October 5 – 8, 2020, with a quorum present.

Leonard Forsman, President

Norma Jean Louie, Secretary