



2023 Winter Convention Portland, Oregon

RESOLUTION #2023 – 07

“REQUEST THAT INDIAN HEALTH SERVICES ADD DENTAL THERAPY AS A QUALIFIED HEALTH PROFESSION WITHIN ITS HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM”

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, ATNI supports the delivery of high-quality, culturally-tailored oral healthcare services in order to eliminate health disparities and improve the quality of life of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities in the Northwest; and

WHEREAS, AI/AN people often have very limited access to health care services and are disproportionately affected by oral health diseases. These disparities are directly related to the

lack of dental health professionals in AI/AN communities, which has caused a detrimental lack of access, and a backlog of dental treatment among AI/AN people; and

WHEREAS, many ATNI member Tribes have great difficulty and face significant challenges in recruiting dental health professionals to work in their communities, which results in further challenges in ensuring oral health care for Tribal members; and

WHEREAS, Dental Therapists (known as Dental Health Aide Therapists when working within the Community Health Aide Program, and hereafter referred to as Dental Therapists) provide vital, patient-centered primary oral healthcare services and have worked effectively in Tribal communities in the United States for nearly 20 years; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown improved access to oral health care and improved health outcomes in communities utilizing Dental Therapists; and

WHEREAS, Dental Therapists have been state-authorized to work for Tribal clinics in 13 states, including all three states within the Portland Indian Health Service (IHS) Area; and

WHEREAS, ATNI member Tribes would benefit from scholarships provided to students enrolled in Dental Therapy Education Programs at institutions of higher education, including both Tribal and private colleges; and

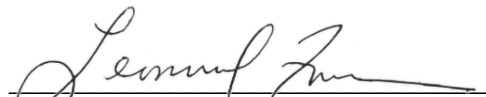
WHEREAS, the IHS Scholarship Program provides scholarship funds for qualified AI/AN health professions students in many areas, but has not previously included Dental Therapist students in this program, although the urgent need to train new oral healthcare professionals to serve Northwest Tribes has been clearly demonstrated; now

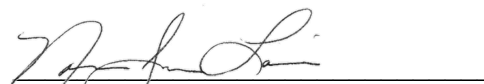
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI does hereby request that the IHS provide scholarships for students enrolled in Dental Therapy Education Programs as part of its Health Professions Scholarships Program; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the President is hereby authorized and directed to execute this resolution and any documents connected therewith, and the Secretary is authorized and directed to attest to the certification.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2023 Winter Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, Portland, Oregon, on January 22-26, 2023 with a quorum approving.


Leonard Forsman, President


Norma Jean Louie, Secretary