



2023 Annual Convention Grand Mound, Washington

RESOLUTION #23 – 48

“CALL TO ACTION FOR STATE GOVERNORS TO DECLARE THE OPIOID AND FENTANYL EPIDEMIC A STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THEIR STATE”

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, despite the national Covid-19 pandemic public health emergency ending, the impacts of the pandemic continue to disproportionately affect AI/AN people and tribes; and

WHEREAS, tribal communities are currently experiencing poor mental health and substance use outcomes as a result of isolation from familial, social and cultural activities,

anxiety and depression, significant deaths, economic instability, and barriers accessing mental health services and substance use treatment during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, as a result, AI/AN people are facing a devastating opioid and fentanyl epidemic with increased overdoses and deaths; and

WHEREAS, AI/AN people are nearly twice as likely to use illicit drugs compared to other racial groups in the U.S., and experience the highest rate of misuse for opioids, prescription pain relievers, and other prescription misuse; and

WHEREAS, the rate of drug overdose deaths, specifically for opioid and fentanyl deaths, are disproportionately higher among AI/ANs in the U.S. compared to other racial groups. Since 2018, the rate of AI/AN opioid overdose deaths nationally has increased 174%; and

WHEREAS, tribes have reported significant increase of opioid and fentanyl related overdose deaths since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the increase in opioid and fentanyl related overdoses is correlated with increases in use of other illicit drugs such as xylazine, suicides, homelessness, child abuse and neglect, children in foster care, incarcerations, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous People; and

WHEREAS, the increase in opioid and fentanyl related overdoses is impacting tribal programs and services, including health care, public safety and tribal justice systems, child welfare, housing, social services and elder care programs, which are all under-resourced and understaffed; and

WHEREAS, tribal resources are exhausted and tribally-based treatment services with wrap around services are extremely limited and/or existing tribal treatment programs are unable to provide the wrap around services that those in treatment need to heal and remain in recovery; and

WHEREAS, tribes are declaring public health emergencies or states of emergencies because of the severity and magnitude of the opioid epidemic impacting their communities; and

WHEREAS, over one thousand (1,000) Tribal leaders, frontline workers, and federal and state policymakers met for three days in August 2023 for the first ever National Tribal Opioid Summit (Summit) that resulted in solutions and policy recommendations to address the devastating impacts of opioid and fentanyl epidemic in tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, during the three-day Summit, AI/AN people with lived experiences related to opioids and fentanyl emphasized the importance of saving lives with community wide-distribution of Narcan and fentanyl testing strips and connecting those using opioids and fentanyl with tribally-based treatment services, with wrap around services; and

WHEREAS, during the three-day Summit, Tribal leaders and community members made clear the severity and magnitude of the opioid epidemic plaguing Indian Country and the need for the President and Governors to declare a National Emergency and States of Emergency,

respectively, to provide immediate relief, support, and regulatory flexibility and the need for federal, state and local officials to partner with tribes to address this epidemic.

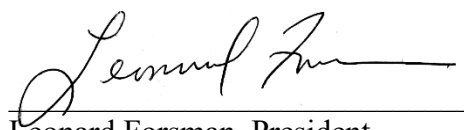
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI calls on State Governors to unilaterally declare the Opioid and Fentanyl Epidemic a State of Emergency in their respective state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI calls upon the Governors to take the following immediate actions to strategically address the opioid and fentanyl epidemic and save lives:

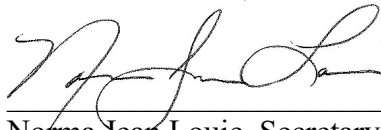
- implement widespread access of free harm reduction training and supplies, including Narcan and fentanyl testing strips; and
- provide immediate funding to support tribally operated treatment facilities, wrap around services, and medically assisted treatment (MAT) programs; and
- streamline certification requirements in coordination with federal agencies for treatment facilities and Opioid Treatment Programs; and
- provide flexibility for tribes to incorporate and fund tribal and cultural practices and to address social determinants of health, including funding to support safe housing (including transitional and recovery housing), food security, and training and workforce opportunities; and
- create a tribal opioid and fentanyl task force to guide state resources for prevention services, culturally based treatment services, access to data and law and justice issues; and
- conduct ongoing tribal consultation with Tribal Nations to ensure that the needs of Tribal Nations are being addressed in all state efforts and initiatives; and
- provide other regulatory or administrative flexibility as necessary to respond to the State of Emergency.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2023 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Great Wolf Lodge, Chehalis, WA, September 18-21, 2023 with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary