



**2024 Annual Convention  
Ridgefield, Washington**

**RESOLUTION #2024 – 37**

**“SUPPORT FOR SEATTLE INDIAN HEALTH BOARD IN BUILDING IN-  
PATIENT TREATMENT CENTER”**

**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 natural, 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**, the Tribes of ATNI support Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB), a private, non-profit 501(c)3 organization incorporated in the State of Washington, envisions a time when all Indian people have healthy and successful lives; and

**WHEREAS**, the mission of Seattle Indian Health Board is to advocate for, provide, and ensure culturally appropriate, high quality, and accessible health and human services to American Indians and Alaska Native; and

**WHEREAS**, the Seattle Indian Health Board opened its doors to the community in 1970 and in the 1960s, Native activists refused to let urban Indians go unseen and ignored any longer, which inspired the formation of a number of Native organizations, including Seattle Indian Health Board; and

**WHEREAS**, for the first time, urban Indians in Seattle had access to healthcare and services by organizations that were operated by American Indians/Alaska Native people, for American Indian/Alaska Native people; and

**WHEREAS**, for more than 50 years, the Seattle Indian Health Board has provided our tribal citizens with healthcare, food, shelter, and a place to practice our ways of life; and

**WHEREAS**, for nearly 30 years, the Seattle Indian Health Board has provided in-patient care through the Thunderbird Treatment Center, until it was determined that a new facility was needed to meet the needs of our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, the Seattle Indian Health Board served over 4,600 patients, more than 60% of whom identified as American Indian and/or Alaska Native; and

**WHEREAS**, today, Seattle Indian Health Board operates three clinics and a mobile van and is in the process of opening two more, which includes an in-patient Thunderbird Treatment Center on Vashon Island, WA; and

**WHEREAS**, the opening of the Thunderbird Treatment Center will not just address a public health crisis, it will support the reclamation of cultural identity and restore dignity to those struggling with addiction and secure a brighter future for generations to come; and

**WHEREAS**, that ATNI has recently learned of opposition to the Seattle Indian Health Board's in-patient Thunderbird Treatment Center by a small group of Vashon residents who have taken action to hinder the opening of this facility, therefore hindering our Tribal citizens' ability to access much-needed services; and

**WHEREAS**, that ATNI understands that the objections raised by the small group of Vashon residents does not reflect the urgent need for this facility nor the overwhelming support it has garnered from tribal communities and beyond; and

**WHEREAS**, that ATNI acknowledges that tribes are in a crisis, witnessing firsthand the devastating impact of fentanyl and opioid addiction on our people and it has fractured families, eroded cultural foundations, and undermined the health and wellbeing of tribal communities; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Native people in Washington die of opioid overdoses at a rate of five times higher than the state average; and

**WHEREAS**, this is unacceptable, our authority and responsibility to our tribal citizens extends far beyond our reservations' borders, and we will take every measure within our power to ensure our tribal citizens get the support they need; and

**WHEREAS**, in recent years, Washington tribes have been on the forefront of addressing the opioid crisis, including holding pharmaceutical companies accountable for introducing opioids to our communities and then leaving tribes to fend for themselves; and working tirelessly with Washington's local and state governments, as well as Congress, to pass legislation to address this crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, urban Indian programs and Washington Tribes are working together to increase tribal specific capacity in Washington State by standing up needed in-patient treatment services for Tribal citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout our efforts, one thing has become abundantly clear—the lack of accessible and culturally competent treatment options has only exacerbated the opioid crisis in tribal communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the immediate opening of the Seattle Indian Health Board's in-patient Thunderbird Treatment Center on Vashon Island will save the lives of American Indians/Alaska Natives, so time is of the essence to move as quickly as possible to get it operating; now

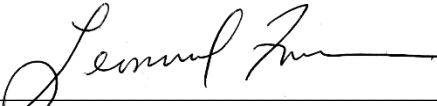
**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that ATNI supports the immediate opening and operation of the Seattle Indian Health Board's in-patient Thunderbird Treatment Center on Vashon Island, WA to address the fentanyl and opioid crisis; and

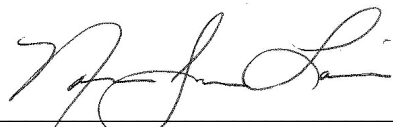
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that ATNI also encourages tribes, tribal organizations and Washington State to support the immediate opening and operation of the Seattle Indian Health Board's Thunderbird Treatment Center to ensure there are no delays in its operation on Vashon Island, WA; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

#### **CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2024 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians, held at ilani Casino Resort, Ridgefield, Washington on September 29 – October 3, 2024 with a quorum present.

  
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Leonard Forsman, President

  
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Norma Jean Louie, Secretary