



2009 Fall Conference Tacoma, Washington

RESOLUTION #09 - 70

"SUPPORT FOR THE IHS DIRECTOR TO ESTABLISH AN INDIAN HEALTH REFORM TASK FORCE"

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 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, the ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians 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 Indian Health Service Director, Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, has begun a process to solicit recommendations to bring reform changes to the Indian Health Service (IHS) to demonstrate change and improvement in order to gain support for funding and to address the health care needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people; and

WHEREAS, on August 3rd the IHS Director sent an email requesting input on the top three priorities for where the Director could begin to work on bringing reform to IHS and encouraged groups to meet and discuss recommendations on where to begin; and

WHEREAS, the Indian health system has evolved over time and by and large has been successful at recognizing and responding to the challenges of serving diverse and very poor populations and health status that is unacceptable by any measure for which significant inroads have been hampered primarily by a serious lack of funding; and

WHEREAS, the IHS has adopted a community based, public health model to provide services, while health reform activities propose to use a competitive, insurance based model, which will not work in many tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, to research the options and develop the most promising changes for the Indian health system will take time and money; and

WHEREAS, it is important to preserve the strengths while ushering in new system changes that are specifically designed to improve the health of AI/AN in a culturally relevant way; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) has provided recommendations to the IHS Director on areas that should be addressed in the IHS reform process, which includes a recommendation to develop a framework for an Indian health care delivery system that complements and benefits from the changes evolving from national health care reform by establishing an Indian Health Reform Task Force to conduct comprehensive research and a decision making process to redesign the Indian health system within the context of health reform goals; now

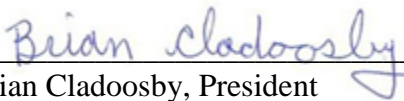
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI strongly urges the IHS Director to establish an Indian Health Reform Task Force to conduct the following:

- I. Provide a framework for an Indian health care delivery system that complements and benefits from any system designed to address national health care reform by establishing an Indian Health Reform Task Force to conduct comprehensive research and a decision making process to redesign the Indian health system within the context of health reform goals. The Task Force will:
 - a) Review and analyze gaps in the levels of health care services provided across the Indian health system that are a result of the varying levels of IHS funding, improving contract healthcare timely reimbursements and third party collections, facilities infrastructure, staffing packages, and third-party collections;
 - b) Gather evidence on utilization, third party collection data;
 - c) Identify conditions that have lead to the poor health of AI/AN across the country;
 - d) Identify models of Indian health care delivery that are successful;


- e) Identify and recommend actions for revising statutes and regulations that impede or restrict access to funding or services needed to systematically improve the health of AI/AN across the country;
- f) The IHS Director shall appoint members of the Task Force and must include a majority membership of tribal representatives; and
- g) The Task Force shall submit its recommendations to the IHS Director and Health and Human Services Secretary one year after the Task Force has been established.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2009 Annual Conference of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at the Tacoma Greater Convention & Trade Center in Tacoma, Washington on September 21 - 24, 2009 with a quorum present.



Brian Cladoosby, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary