2012 Mid-Year Convention
Lincoln City, Oregon

RESOLUTION #12 – 27

"SUPPORT FOR OPTIONAL MEDICAID BENEFITS TO BE DELIVERED THROUGH THE IHS, TRIBAL AND URBAN INDIAN HEALTH SYSTEM"

PREAMBLE

We the members of 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 to promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

WHEREAS, 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 the ATNI; and

WHEREAS, the State of Arizona has recently received approval for a 1115 Demonstration Waiver from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to provide expanded Medicaid benefits to be delivered through the Indian Health Service (IHS), Tribally-operated and urban Indian health programs that will be very beneficial to addressing the health disparities of American Indian people; and

WHEREAS, Idaho, Oregon and Washington tribes have all requested that State Medicaid programs pursue a 1115 Medicaid Waiver amendment to mitigate benefit reductions in State Medicaid programs that only serve to perpetuate health disparities and have a harmful effect on services to American Indian people; and

WHEREAS, tribes have requested that the states explore options to exempt American Indian and Alaska Natives from benefit reductions and/or explore opportunities to be able to provide optional services that have already been reduced in the Medicaid program; and

WHEREAS, the States have the option to expand Medicaid benefits that would be delivered through Indian Health Service (IHS), Tribal (T), or urban Indian health programs (U) collectively referred to as "I/T/U"; and

WHEREAS, the American Indian Health Commission (AIHC) and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB) have sent letters to State Medicaid Directors recommending that Oregon and Washington move forward with an 1115 Medicaid Waiver amendment to restore benefit reductions and to allow optional services to be provided through the I/T/U; and

WHEREAS, Washington State's Medicaid Program, the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Board have met by conference call to discuss the feasibility of Washington State to pursue such a waiver and for which CMS provided technical issues that would need to be addressed in Washington's request; and

WHEREAS, NPAIHB developed a discussion draft on the policy issues raised by CMS that include: facility based exemption for services, facility capacity, benefit design, Federal Medical Assistance percentages (FMAP) issues, alternatives for State match and surge/capacity issues; and

WHEREAS, the discussion draft has been vetted with Northwest Tribes in the States of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington and there is consensus amongst all Tribes to move the proposals presented in the discussion draft forward to CMS as a waiver request in each of the respective states; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI formally approves the recommendations presented in the discussion draft to allow optional services to be provided by the Indian Health Service, Tribal, or urban Indian health programs in State Medicaid programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI supports the collaboration of Oregon and Washington State Medicaid programs to move a joint waiver proposal forward to CMS and to do so immediately.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2012 Mid-Year Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, held at Chinook Winds Casino Resort, Lincoln City, Oregon, on May 21 – 24, 2012, with a quorum present.

Fawn Sharp, President

Norma Jean Louie, Secretary