



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PHX-08-037

TITLE: Recommendation for CMS and IHS to Develop a LTC Initiative to Assist Tribes to Provide Elder Care Services

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American 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 the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) elders are raising as a percentage of the overall Tribal population and will continue to grow with the effect of baby boomers coming of elder age, many will emergence with chronic diseases, which will place a tremendous financial burden on Tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, planning LTC services for AI/AN elders is challenging in which institutional care (i.e. nursing homes) is not desired by most Tribal elders, as well as the cultural issues associated with placing Tribal elders in institutions given their status and prominence in traditional Indian society, and the administrative requirements associated with financing LTC services; and

WHEREAS, because funding for LTC has been extremely limited and fragmented, the responsibility for LTC in many Tribal communities has fallen on Indian Health Service (IHS) and Tribally-operated health programs, which poses unique challenges in providing LTC since these systems were designed primarily to handle acute care needs; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that 14% of AI/AN elders (age 65 and over) have difficulty dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home because of health problems or functional limitations that make it difficult to live independently; and

WHEREAS, limited assistance in the home is frequently all that is needed for these elders to be able to remain in their own or their relatives' homes; and

WHEREAS, because very little LTC infrastructure exists in Indian Country, more needs to be done to examine and develop Tribal capacity to serve this growing segment of the Indian population, including the development of LTC alternatives (compared to nursing homes) like less expensive home and community based care which can be funded under state Medicaid programs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby urge that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Indian Health Service initiate a long term care initiative to assist to develop administrative infrastructure of Tribal health programs and aging programs to establish Medicaid-reimbursed LTC programs for Tribal elders; and

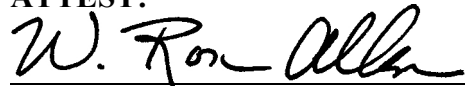
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2008 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Arizona on October 19-24, 2008, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:


Recording Secretary