



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #DEN-18-008

TITLE: Support for the Permanent Inclusion of Non-Pharmacologic Practitioners as Health Professions within Indian Health Service

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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 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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, acute and chronic pain escalated the use of opioid pain medication and other drugs across Alaska and Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, the Center of Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain recommends that non-pharmacologic therapy and non-opioid pharmacologic therapy are preferred for chronic pain; and

WHEREAS, Congress authorized the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to use chiropractic care in their facilities in 1999, and the VA has since grown the program to provide services to all eligible veterans because of the health benefits for chronic pain and decrease in opioid use; and

WHEREAS, Indian Health Service (IHS) funding is limited and health care delivery is increasingly expensive; and

WHEREAS, IHS and tribal health care programs incur higher costs than average health care programs in the United States increasing the urgency and need to integrate innovative care that improves patient outcomes and reduces cost; and

WHEREAS, Doctors of Chiropractic, Doctors of Naturopathic Medicine, Licensed Medical Massage Therapist and Licensed Acupuncturists specialize in natural therapies, spinal manipulation, health promotion and wellness consistent with the culturally-connected therapies of our Alaska Native/American Indian people; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that patients managed by Doctors of Chiropractic, Doctors of Naturopathic Medicine, Licensed Medical Massage Therapist and Licensed Acupuncturists show dramatically reduced pharmaceutical costs, reductions in surgeries, reduction of inpatient hospital admissions and days spent in hospitals; and

WHEREAS, IHS does not consistently keep Doctors of Chiropractic, Doctors of Naturopathic Medicine, Licensed Acupuncturists, Licensed Medical Massage Therapist and other non-pharmacologic physicians on their list of health professions; and

WHEREAS, being on the list of IHS health professions means people in these professions are eligible for IHS scholarships, loan repayment, and career opportunities within our tribal health care facilities; and


WHEREAS, Alaska Native/American Indian people deserve the same quality of care and the same level of resources as the VA.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) does hereby urge the Indian Health Service to permanently include Doctors of Chiropractic, Doctors of Naturopathic Medicine, Licensed Acupuncturist, Licensed Medical Massage Therapist and other non-pharmacologic physicians on its list of health professions; 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 2018 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Hyatt Regency in Denver, Colorado October 21-26, 2018, with a quorum present.


Jefferson Keel, President

ATTEST:


Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary