



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution # PHX -16-027

### TITLE: In Support of Increasing Resources in Native American Communities to Combat Heroin and Opioid Abuse and Addiction in Indian Country

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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**, tribal governments are sovereign governments that maintain a unique trust relationship with the United States of America; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to this trust relationship, the United States federal government is bound by legal duties, moral obligations, and the fulfillment of understandings and expectations which advance healthier and safer Native American communities throughout Indian Country; and

**WHEREAS**, in recent years, drug trafficking, prescription drug abuse and the resulting heroin and opioid epidemics have plagued Native American communities throughout Indian Country, causing countless deaths of many young people from overdoses and suicide; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the rates of [death from prescription opioid overdose](#) among American Indian or Alaska Natives increased almost four-fold from 1.3 per 100,000 in 1999 to 5.1 per 100,000 in 2013; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the National Drug Control Policy report of 2009, among all ethnic groups, Native Americans and Alaskan Natives are the highest percentage rate (18.3) of 12 years old and higher to have used illegal drugs in the past 30 days; and

**WHEREAS**, there is a significant lack of resources for Education, Treatment, Preventative Services and Public Safety in Native American communities to address this drug epidemic, which poses a direct threat to Native citizens and the future of Indian Country; and

**WHEREAS**, the federal government must make critical investments to address heroin and opioid overdose deaths within Native American communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) – Office of Justice Services (OJS) is vested with the primary responsibility of providing law enforcement services in Indian country; and

**WHEREAS**, BIA-OJS responsibilities include managing complex criminal investigations, implementing interdiction programs, carrying out surveillance of criminals, infiltrating drug trafficking networks, developing and implementing undercover techniques, executing search warrants, confiscating illegal drug supplies, and collecting and processing evidence; and

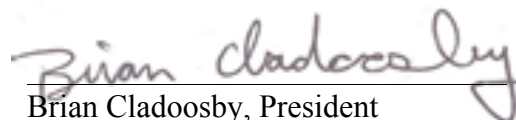
**WHEREAS**, the current structure of the BIA-OJS drug enforcement program is divided into regions, and resources are limited as some tribes have no BIA drug investigator within hundreds of miles and some several states away.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians hereby calls on all federal agencies, including but not limited to, the Department of Interior, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration and the Department of Justice, to increase resources including funding and support services to advance education, prevention, treatment services and public safety programs designed to address heroin and opioid abuse and addiction within Indian Country; 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 2016 Annual Convention of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Phoenix Convention Center, October 9 to October 14, 2016, with a quorum present.

  
Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:

  
Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary