



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #REN-08-040C

TITLE: Request for Immediate Congressional Oversight Hearings Concerning Contract Health Services of the 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, 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, the United States Congress is about to pass an historical reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, which contains a number of provisions relating to Contract Health Services Program (CHS), in which payments may be made to private providers of inpatient and specialty care by the IHS on behalf of eligible Tribal members referred for provision of health care to non-IHS facilities generally off the reservations; and

WHEREAS, the United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is holding a hearing, tentatively set for sometime before the end of June, 2008, regarding contract health care, the issue of health care rationing and the problems associated with these issues; and

WHEREAS, among these emergency issues are: 1) the priority system, in which patients are denied referral to a private provider for medical attention from the IHS who have non-life or limb threatening conditions; 2) patient billing issues where eligible Tribal members are denied payment for medical services provided by non-IHS providers, resulting in credit problems, lack of ability to get future medical services, and lack of willingness to get preventive medical services for many medical conditions; 3) lack of funds for services provided for CHS, resulting in the phenomenon quaintly described as "don't get sick after June" or in some cases even earlier, and 4) maintenance of adequate record keeping of referrals and denials; and

WHEREAS, the Indian Health Service is routinely funded at fifty to sixty percent of total need according to the Federal Health Disparity Index.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support and requests a Congressional oversight concerning the issues related to CHS by both the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs and the House Natural Resources Committee; and

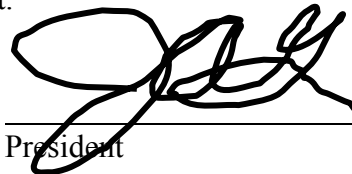
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support efforts in the 110th Congress and in future Congresses to appropriate an additional \$1 billion for the IHS to be used, in part, to address underfunding of services provided by the CHS program, an additional amount that has resoundingly been supported and passed by the United States Senate earlier this year in the 110th Congress, and does support additional sums for Indian health care as are necessary and appropriate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does expect the United States to uphold essential treaty, legal and fiduciary obligations to American Indians consistent with the spirit and intent of treaties signed with Tribal nations and the United States Constitution; and

BE IT FINALLY 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 Mid-Year Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel and Casino in Reno, Nevada on June 1-4, 2008, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary