



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #PHX-16-050

### **TITLE: Improving Financial Subsidies for Native American Access to Life-Sustaining Dialysis and Patient Care**

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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**, on behalf of the Native Americans Throughout the United States, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, hereby petitions the National Congress of American Indians to consider prioritizing a serious problem that has impacted the health and daily lives of Native Americans for a generation, and unfortunately, a problem with no end in sight. Kidney failure is a severe medical condition that greatly affects Native communities and only a kidney transplant or dialysis can help sustain life after failure occurs; and

**WHEREAS**, although other afflictions receive greater attention to Native communities, it would be challenging to find a member of the greater Tribal community that does not struggle with or know someone who suffers from diseases or other problems that lead to kidney failure, including, but not limited to, Type I and II Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Long-Term Auto-Immune Disease, Prolonged Urinary Tract Obstruction, and Polycystic Kidney Disease, all afflictions that deal with blood flow regulation, pressure and filtration processes; and

**WHEREAS**, when the consequence of a related medical condition leads to kidney failure, dialysis becomes the most likely and sometimes the only solution for medical treatment, where transplants are not a viable option. But for the high cost associated with providing dialysis services, this issue may not require the attention it deserves today; and

**WHEREAS**, for the Apache people residing in the White Mountain region, dialysis services and a need for proper and respectful patient care has been in high demand for several decades and there remains a great need for financial subsidies and public support for individuals struggling with kidney failure and those people requiring dialysis service. It is for this reason, that the White Mountain Apache Tribe appeals to the National Congress of American Indians, to ensure that moving forward, no more lives are lost in vain and/or disregarded as lower priority matters due to profitability or other concerns that disregard human life in favor of wealth building; and

**WHEREAS**, due to the general privatization of the health industry in the United States and lax regulations on health insurers and medical providers, there is no question that Native Americans are dying at a greater rate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, than they would if there were higher regulatory scrutiny and exposure to health problems afflicting disadvantaged Tribal Communities; and

**WHEREAS**, on behalf of all Native Americans struggling with Kidney failure and surviving by way of dialysis throughout the United States, the White Mountain Apache government requests that the National Congress of American Indians evaluate the myriad problems associated with Federal allotments for medical provider and insurance purposes, and that the issue of dialysis and inadequate funding and government support for Native lives be afforded its proper place atop a number of high-priority issues that is resulting in unnecessary death and hardship on Native peoples nationwide; and

**WHEREAS**, the following concerns are hereby recognized by the Congress and shall guide NCAI on appropriately supporting dialysis treatment and medical care for those Native people that suffer from kidney failure, or where kidney failure is imminent:

1. Rates paid on behalf of Tribal members not privately insured, currently act as a deterrent for investment by dialysis service providers in disadvantaged communities. NCAI should seek to ensure that where such services are needed, that they are readily available for Native Americans in need, and that travel times of 90 minutes or higher are deemed unacceptable, if not negligent on the part of the Federal Government and Healthcare Providers nationwide.
2. Consider the funds that are allocated by the United States Congress for the purpose of promoting scientific research on dialysis, diabetic, and any afflictions that ultimately lead to the need for dialysis treatment.
3. Taking proactive steps that promote preventative care measures and serve to delay the onset of Kidney failure in Native Americans and particularly the segment of individuals that are genetically predisposed to such medical conditions.
4. Advocate in Congress, the Administration, and with partner organization to effectuate change on how medical treatment is provided, made available, and the mechanisms in place to compensate providers at a rate that reasonably ensures that Native Communities will receive the medical care that they require.
5. As with most policy issues and problems that cripple Tribal communities, it is increasingly clear that advocating for greater financial subsidies, stricter regulations on insurers and/or providers, or a combination thereof would serve to provide Native

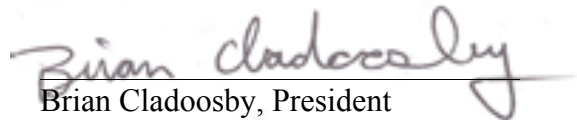
American communities with much needed medical care and attention that suffering American Indians need to survive and lead generally better lives.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the National Congress of American Indians that it will utilize its advocacy efforts to incorporate the realities of kidney failure and dialysis treatment throughout the country, regardless of the source of the medical condition underlying the need for treatment into its health policy work; 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 Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Phoenix Convention Center, October 9<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> 2016, with a quorum present.

  
Brian Cladoosby, President

**ATTEST:**

  
Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary