

# National Indian Health Board



## National Indian Health Board Resolution 08-02

### INDIAN HEALTH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

**WHEREAS**, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), established in 1972, serves all Federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribal governments by advocating for the improvement of health care delivery to AI/ANs, as well as upholding the Federal government's trust responsibility to AI/AN Tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal government of the United States has a unique and special relationship with AI/ANs to provide health care as established through the U.S. Constitution, Treaties with Indian Tribes, U.S. Supreme Court decisions and federal legislation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal government carries out its trust responsibility to provide health care and other Federal benefits through a government to government relationship with Indian Tribes as established by Presidential Executive Order 13175; and

**WHEREAS**, The Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, administers health care to 1.9 million AI/ANs residing in Tribal communities in 35 states, directly, or through contracts or compacts with tribes and tribal organizations under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA). Approximately 50% of the Indian health programs are operated by tribes or tribal organizations under the ISDEAA; and

**WHEREAS**, for health care not available at IHS or tribal facilities, the IHS and tribes purchase health care from the private or public sector under the contract health services (CHS) program. The IHS CHS program is a payer of last resort to Medicare and Medicaid programs; and

**WHEREAS**, in FY 2008, the IHS received \$3.3 billion through the Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act that account for approximately 40% of level of need funding. The Indian health programs must supplement funding through third party resources: Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP, private and tribal health insurance, and the Department of Defense and Veterans' Affairs; and

**WHEREAS**, despite the Federal government's trust responsibility to provide health care to AI/ANs, Indian people suffer disproportionately higher health disparities and mortality rates compared to the general population:

- i. AI/ANs have the highest cancer mortality rates – due to late detection and lack of diagnostic and treatment options;
- ii. Infant mortality rate is 150% greater for AI/ANs than that of Caucasian infants;
- iii. AI/ANs are 2.6 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes;
- iv. AI/ANs are 7.7 times more likely to die from alcoholism;



- v. Suicide for AI/ANs is 2 1/2 times higher than the national average, and the #2 cause of death for Indian youth.

**WHEREAS**, the government-to-government relationship between Indian Tribes and the United States requires that a new Administration consult with Indian Tribes on policy and legislative matters that impact Tribal communities; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President immediately create a White House Initiative on American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Health Care; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President elevate the Director of the Indian Health Service to an Assistant Secretary of Indian Health within the Department of Health and Human Services in order to more effectively and efficiently carry out the United States' responsibility to provide health care to AI/ANs; and


**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President pursuant to Executive Order 13175, requiring the Federal government to consult with Indian Tribes, create a Tribal Liaison Office directed by an AI/AN in each of the Federal agencies and including the Office of Management and Budget; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President submit a budget to Congress that requests full funding reflecting 100% of the needs to support the Indian health care delivery system; and


**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the President ensure that any health care reform advanced by the President and his Administration must include the Indian health delivery system, that Indian tribes be at the table in the development of any universal health care or other health care reform efforts, including efforts to integrate other Federal health programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans' Affairs, Department of Defense, and private insurance.

#### CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with quorum present, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2008.

  
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Chairman, H. Sally Smith

**ATTEST:**

  
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**Recording Secretary, Cynthia Manuel**