

National Indian Health Board



National Indian Health Board Resolution 16-08

PURPOSE: A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF S.1830 SENIORS MENTAL HEALTH ACCESS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2015

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 unmet health needs of American Indians and Alaska Natives are severe and the health status of American Indians and Alaska Natives is far below that of the general population of the United States, resulting in an average life expectancy for American Indians and Alaska Natives 4.2 years less than that for the U.S. all races population; and

WHEREAS, S. 1830, Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015 would amend Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under Part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes; and

WHEREAS, S. 1830, Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015 seeks to increase health care access, improve quality of care, reduce overall health care costs, and meet critical health needs by enabling Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Marriage Family Therapists to provide patient care services as consistent with their education, training, competencies and clinical license. Enabling these providers to practice and be reimbursed for services within the scope of their education, training, competencies, and participate fully as an integral part of the patient's health care team will improve health outcomes and greatly benefit our patient populations; and

WHEREAS, S. 1830, Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015 promotes increased access to care for underserved beneficiaries in Medically Underserved Areas, Medically Underserved Populations, and Health Professional Shortage Areas, as designated by the Health Resources Services Administration. As the shortage of primary care physicians increases, so too will the challenges that patients in underserved communities face, especially those related to access. This legislation can help address provider shortages and access issues in underserved areas; and

WHEREAS, S. 1830, Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015 promotes cost-effective health care by increasing access to care and opportunities for early intervention at cost-effective settings so as to minimize long-term health care costs such as those associated with preventable higher-cost conditions; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB) supports the passage of S. 1830, Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015 to provide for the coverage of Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Marriage Family Therapists under Part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution hereby affirms our support of the passage of S. 1830, Seniors Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with quorum present, on the 30th day of August 2016.



Chairperson

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary