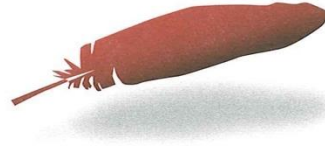


# National Indian Health Board



## National Indian Health Board Resolution 21 – 07

### Using the University Land Grant System to Address Indian Health Service Physician Vacancies

**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 trust responsibility is a legal obligation under which the federal government "has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust" toward AI/AN tribes<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, The federal trust responsibility establishes the basis for a variety of services provided to federally recognized AI/AN Tribes and Villages, including the provision of physicians<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, The Government Accountability Office reports that 29 percent of federal Indian Health Services' (IHS) physician positions on average are vacant, with some Areas operating with up to 46 percent of their physician positions vacant<sup>3</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, There are 52 land-grant universities built on public land transferred to states from the federal government with passage of the Morrill Act of 1862<sup>4</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, Land-grant universities have raised nearly half a billion adjusted 2020 dollars from use or sale of 10.7 million acres of public land expropriated from 245 Tribes<sup>4</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, Land-grant universities collectively enroll less than half a percent AI/AN students across their undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs<sup>4</sup>; and

**WHEREAS**, Land-grant universities enroll AI/AN medical students far below their national representation of 3 percent according to the 2020 US Census (1.23% AI/AN medical students at allopathic (MD-granting) and 0.58% AI/AN medical students at osteopathic (DO-granting) land-grant medical schools);<sup>5-6</sup> and

**WHEREAS**, Land-grant universities are active recipients of federal funding; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the National Indian Health Board calls upon the US Congress to amend the Morrill Act of 1862 to reconcile the expropriation of Indigenous land and educational inequities present for AI/AN undergraduate, graduate, and professional students; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the National Indian Health Board calls upon 1862 land-grant universities operating medical schools to identify and eradicate policies and practices that create functional barriers preventing the enrollment of AI/AN medical students; and

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the National Indian Health Board calls upon the Indian Health Service and Health Resources Services Administration to develop new clinical and educational funding opportunities encouraging partnerships between Indian/Tribal/Urban facilities, Tribal governments, and 1862 land-grant medical schools; and

**THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of NIHB until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

### CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with quorum present, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of November, 2021.



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**Chairperson, William Smith**

**ATTEST:**



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**Secretary, Lisa Elgin**

### References

1. Seminole Nation v United States, 316 US 286 (1942).
2. Fact Sheets: Basis for Health Services. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service. Updated January 2021.
3. Agency Faces Ongoing Challenges Filling Provider Vacancies. United States Government Accountability Office. August 2018.
4. Ahtone, T, Lee, R. Land-grab universities. High Country News. March 30, 2020.
5. Table B-5.1: Total Enrollment by U.S. Medical School and Race/Ethnicity, 2020-2021, Association of American Medical Colleges.
6. Total Enrollment by Osteopathic Medical College and Race/Ethnicity, 2019-2020, American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine.