

# National Indian Health Board



## National Indian Health Board Resolution 18-06

### **INCREASING PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES: A REQUEST TO FUND AND EXPAND TEACHING HEALTH CENTERS IN INDIAN COUNTRY**

**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**, there exists a maldistribution of physicians practicing in rural areas with approximately one quarter of the country's population served by only ten percent of the country's physicians; and

**WHEREAS**, within Indian Country, thirty per cent of our population live in rural areas including geographically remote areas with an even greater reduced access to physician delivered health care continuing to exemplify the severe Native healthcare workforce shortage; and

**WHEREAS**, Teaching Health Centers aim to ensure a viable primary care workforce for medically underserved communities by providing training at federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and similar sites, which host physicians completing their residency that are more likely to practice medicine in underserved communities, according to research; and

**WHEREAS**, Teaching Health Centers operated by an Indian Tribe, Tribal organization or Urban Indian Organization are eligible for funding through this established program, and currently two Tribes operate such programs (Choctaw and Puyallup Nations); and

**WHEREAS**, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report found that rural patients are more likely than their urban counterparts to die from heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries, respiratory disease and stroke; and

**WHEREAS**, funding for the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education Program will provide for the expansion of previously established programs, the maintenance of current programs and the establishment of new training sites in Indian country; and

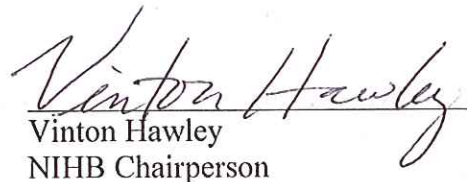
**WHEREAS**, funding for the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education Program will increase the pool of physicians available for AI/AN health care in Indian Health Service or Tribal settings and allow training sites for AI/AN medical school graduates that will address the Native Health care workforce deficiency;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the National Indian Health Board supports federal funding for the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education Program.

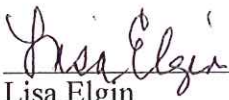
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the National Indian Health Board encourages Congress and administrators of the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education Program within the Health Resources and Services Administration to expand the program's scope in Indian Country through the support of Tribal Teaching Health Centers.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with quorum present, on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2018.

  
Vinton Hawley  
NIHB Chairperson

**ATTEST:**

  
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Lisa Elgin  
NIHB Secretary