

**National Indian Health Board
Resolution 25 – 03**

STANDING IN SUPPORT OF OUR TWO SPIRIT RELATIVES

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, prior to contact with settlers, many Tribal nations across the country and continent had long and distinguished histories of respect and inclusion of those in their communities who might now be described as Two Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, third and fourth gender, queer, or another identity (LGBTQ+); and

WHEREAS, all Tribal citizens are born free and equal in dignity and rights; and

WHEREAS, our Tribes and nations are unwaveringly committed to all causes that strengthen the health of our Tribal citizens, families, communities, and nations; and

WHEREAS, NIHB supports the health and wellbeing of all Native people, including those who are Two Spirit or LGBTQ+, and

WHEREAS, many Two Spirit or LGBTQ+ ancestors and citizens of our Tribes and nations have been targets of homophobia and transphobia, resulting in extremely harmful and even lethal effects; and

WHEREAS, Two Spirit youth experience increased levels of bullying and harassment, resulting in higher rates of truancy, incarceration, self-harm, attempted suicide, and suicide; and

WHEREAS, 50 to 80 percent of Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ adults experience some form of discrimination or harassment in the workplace, 11 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native transgender and gender nonconforming people have been physically assaulted at work, and 10 percent have been sexually assaulted at work; and

WHEREAS, Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ individuals experience health disparities including increased risk of anxiety, depression, HIV, exposure to violence, and suicidality; and

WHEREAS, in recent months, Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ individuals are nationally experiencing increased harassment, discrimination, and reduced access to services critical for health and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ individuals disproportionately experience refusal of care, discrimination, and insufficient provider knowledge in healthcare settings; and

WHEREAS, Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ individuals thrive in affirming settings which demonstrate respect and inclusion of their identities; and

WHEREAS, many Tribes have taken steps to prohibit discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in our laws and to address such discriminations; and

WHEREAS, the principles of sovereignty and self-determination dictate that Tribal nations have full authority over issues that impact health, welfare, preservation of culture, and future for our tribal citizens; and

WHEREAS, Tribal nations, two spirit equality, and decolonization are inextricably linked, and one cannot be truly achieved without the other.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that NIHB hereby declares its support of the full equality of all Tribal persons, including two spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Tribal citizens, in the interest of furthering the cause of human rights and the principle of nondiscrimination for all our citizens wherever they reside, and so that all of our Tribal people can walk this land without fear, exclusion, or mistreatment, and reach their fullest potential in life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we are committed to promoting the principle of nondiscrimination and to supporting and strengthening individuals, families, communities and Tribal nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NIHB calls on the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Indian Health Service and other government agencies to preserve and expand programs, resources, and services protecting the health and wellbeing of our Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ youth and adults; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NIHB calls for expanded federal investment into culturally informed behavioral health and suicide prevention services to protect our Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ relatives; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the policy of the National Indian Health Board until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with a quorum present, on the 11th day of March 2025.

ATTEST:



Vice Chairperson, Sam Moose



Chairperson, William Smith