



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2003:112

SUPPORT FOR THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE INDIAN HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-four (24) federally recognized tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the "Indian Health Care Improvement Act" has since 1976 provided a detailed structure for addressing the health care needs of American Indian/Alaska Native people in a manner consistent with the federal responsibility and authorization for appropriations in the Act expired on September 30, 2000; and
- WHEREAS,** the reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act bill as drafted by House Legislative Counsel in consultation with the National Steering Committee will soon be introduced by Congressman Young (R-Alaska); and
- WHEREAS,** the bill, to be introduced, has been drafted to address concerns raised by the Administration, Congress, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Indian Health Service (IHS), and tribal governments; and
- WHEREAS,** the USET Board of Directors endorses the enactment of the draft bill and supports the modifications contained therein, which are intended to (1) increase the number of Indians involved in health professions; (2) improve the delivery of healthcare services and increase the tribal consultation requirements relevant to health service delivery; (3) identify the total health facility deficiency in Indian country and authorize innovative approaches to health facility construction financing without waiving the federal responsibility to provide health services under existing federal law; (4) increase access to Medicare, Medicaid and other third party reimbursement for health services to AI/AN people; (5) increase access to health services for urban AI/AN people without reducing federal support for health care to tribal AI/AN people; (6) establish the Indian Health Service (IHS) as an agency of the Public Health Service ; (7) comprehensive behavioral health program; and (8) establish a commission to study the issue of how the federal government's obligation to provide health care to AI/AN people should be maintained as an entitlement and to provide for negotiated rulemaking on critical health care issues; and
- WHEREAS,** reauthorization of the "Indian Health Care Improvement Act" is essential to maintain the federal policy of raising the health status of AI/AN people to the highest possible level and the draft bill will remove barriers to improvements in such status as identified above; and
- WHEREAS,** the draft bill takes into account the development of the federal policy of tribal self-determination and self-governance, which has developed since the original Indian Health Care Improvement Act was enacted and seeks to assure that health programs reflect tribal and urban decision-making to the maximum extent feasible; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** that the USET Board of Directors supports the introduction, passage and enactment of the draft Indian Health Care Improvement Act legislation.

"Because there is strength in Unity"

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CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Semi-Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present in Choctaw, MS, Thursday, June 5, 2003.



Keller George, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Beverly M. Wright, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.