



United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

Nashville, TN Office:

711 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37214
Phone: (615) 872-7900
Fax: (615) 872-7417

Washington, DC Office:

400 North Capitol Street, Suite 585
Washington, D.C., 20001
Phone: (202) 624-3550
Fax: (202) 393-5218

USET Resolution No. 2016:041

INCREASED FUNDING AND PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES NEEDED TO ADDRESS THE OPIOID AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE EPIDEMIC IN INDIAN COUNTRY

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-six (26) federally recognized Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET SPF Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribal Nation, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribal Nations' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** a unique government-to-government relationship exists between Tribal Nations and the federal government, a relationship that is grounded in the U.S. Constitution, numerous treaties, statutes, federal court case law, regulations and executive orders that establish and define a trust relationship between the U.S. and Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** the protection of lands, natural resources, and preserving the health and welfare of their people are fundamental priorities for Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** use of illicit drugs such as heroin and opioids has become epidemic in some Native communities and is threatening to have long-term negative impacts that will take more than one generation to recover from; and
- WHEREAS,** Indian Health Service (IHS) data indicates that the rate of drug-related deaths among American Indians and Alaska Natives increased from five per 100,000 population (adjusted) in 1989-1991 to 22.7 per 100,000 in 2007-2009;
- WHEREAS,** according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the rates of death from prescription opioid overdose among American Indians and Alaska Natives increased almost four-fold from 1.3 per 100,000 in 1999 to 5.1 per 100,000 in 2013; and
- WHEREAS,** many USET SPF member Tribal Nations are impacted by opioid and substance abuse, and in some USET SPF Tribal communities, the abuse has reached epidemic levels; and
- WHEREAS,** state and federal agencies are not adequately monitoring and evaluating the evolving level of abuse and destruction done to Tribal Nations by this drug epidemic;
- WHEREAS,** for example, the New York State Health Department released a Heroin/Opioid report in May 2016 indicating that there had been zero deaths among the state's Tribal Nations in the past several years, but there were at least five opioid and substance abuse deaths within the Seneca Nation in the weeks leading up to the release of the report; and

- WHEREAS,** many Tribal Nations are working to collect nation-specific data, but this remains difficult for a variety of reasons, including lack of resources and inadequate mortality reporting from coroners, which results in a dearth of Tribal data regionally and nationally; and
- WHEREAS,** USET SPF is concerned that because of the limited data available, adequate funding may not be available to Tribal Nations to combat this drug crisis; and
- WHEREAS,** in December 2015, the IHS and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) announced a new partnership to reduce opioid-related overdoses among American Indians and Alaska Natives; and
- WHEREAS,** in 2016, mechanisms are expected to be in place to enable more than 90 IHS pharmacies to dispense naloxone, an overdose reversal drug, to as many as 500 BIA Office of Justice Services officers in order to administer emergency treatment to people experiencing an opioid overdose; and
- WHEREAS,** President Obama and Congress have both proposed increased spending to combat the heroin and opioid crisis; and
- WHEREAS,** although both the House of Representatives and Senate have taken actions toward passing numerous opioid-related bills this year, the measures being considered do not include provisions that would enable Tribal Nations to adequately address their needs with respect to opioid and heroin abuse; and
- WHEREAS,** Tribal Nations are not adequately being afforded the same level of access to prevention initiatives and treatments as other high-need communities through current legislation; and
- WHEREAS,** in December 2010, the United States recognized the rights of its First Peoples through its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), whose provisions and principles support and promote the purposes of this resolution; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED,** the USET SPF Board of Directors calls upon President Obama’s Administration and Congress to ensure that Tribal Nations have adequate access to all new funding and programs to address opioid and heroin abuse by setting aside a portion of any funding specifically for Tribal Nations; and, be it further
- RESOLVED,** the USET SPF Board of Directors urges Congress and the Administration to prioritize Tribal inclusion as legislation is being developed, deliberated, and enacted; and, be it further
- RESOLVED,** the USET SPF Board of Directors requests that the Administration and Congress expand access to treatment programs and allow the use of culturally appropriate treatment for prescription drug abuse and heroin abuse; and, be it finally
- RESOLVED,** the USET SPF Board of Directors calls upon the federal and state agencies to continue to consult with affected Tribal Nations on a government-to-government basis to develop additional

“Because there is strength in Unity”

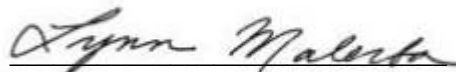
mechanisms and supporting data to reduce the rate of opioid abuse and drug overdoses in Indian Country.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Semi-Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Atmore, AL, May 18, 2016.



Brian Patterson, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Chief Lynn Malerba, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

“Because there is strength in Unity”