



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2003:079

SUPPORT FOR INTRODUCTION OF THE INDIAN HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT WITHIN THE HOUSE AND SENATE DURING THE 108TH CONGRESSIONAL SESSION

- 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 (IHCIA) has since 1976 provided a detailed structure for addressing the health care needs of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) people in a manner consistent with the federal responsibility; and
- WHEREAS,** P.L. 94-437 the IHCIA expired on September 30, 2000, but has been funded based on the authorities contained within the Snyder Act or through annual appropriations; and
- WHEREAS,** both the House and Senate have had reauthorization bills pending since 1999 (House) and 2000 (Senate) based on the National Tribal Steering Committee (NSC) draft that was finalized in the fall of 1999; and
- WHEREAS,** former Chief Joyce Dugan, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Chairman Eddie Tullis, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, and Vice-Chairman Buford Rolin, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, were directly involved in the development of the NSC draft bill through participation on the NSC on behalf of the USET member tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the USET Board of Directors endorses the enactment of the tribally developed bill which is intended to (1) increase the number of Indian health professionals; (2) improve the delivery of health 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 reimbursements for health services provided 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) provide authorization for a 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 regarding critical health care issues; and
- WHEREAS,** the introduction and subsequent passage of the IHCIA is essential to maintain the federal policy of raising the health status of AI/AN people to the highest possible level; and
- WHEREAS,** the IHCIA takes account of the establishment of the federal policy regarding tribal self-determination and self-governance, which has developed since the original IHCIA was enacted and seeks to assure that health programs reflect tribal and urban decision-making to the maximum feasible extent; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** that the USET Board of Directors, supports the introduction of the IHCIA and urges Congress to approve the NSC draft bill; be it further

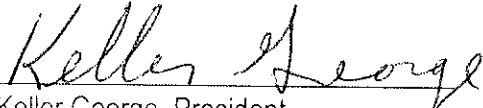
“Because there is strength in Unity”

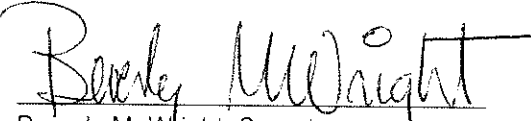
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RESOLVED that the USET Board of Directors respectfully requests that hearings regarding IHCA be scheduled to allow tribal leaders across the nation to provide testimony and address concerns with the bill raised by Congress, the Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Impact Week Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Arlington, VA on Thursday, February 6, 2003.


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


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