



USET Resolution No. 2009:046

**SUPPORT OF THE INCLUSION OF INDIAN COUNTRY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGISLATION
REGARDING HEALTH CARE REFORM**

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-five (25) 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,** Health Care Reform continues to command high level attention with the new Administration and Congress; and
- WHEREAS,** USET commends the Administration for the establishment of the White House Office of Health Reform in the interest of providing all Americans access to high-quality, affordable health care; and
- WHEREAS,** it is imperative that Indian Country be proactive and involved in the development of any health care reform legislation and have a seat at the table in the advancement of any reform efforts; and
- WHEREAS,** it is vital that the Administration and Congress assure that all health care reform proposals acknowledge and reflect the Federal government's trust responsibility to provide health care to American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN), as expressly recognized in Federal law and policy; and
- WHEREAS,** health care reform proposals must assure that the unique Indian health care system created by the Federal government to carry out its trust responsibility is not adversely impacted, and, indeed, is strengthened and enhanced by reform efforts; and
- WHEREAS,** health care reform legislation should include policies modeled on provisions recently enacted in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which protect individual AI/ANs from Medicaid premiums and co-payments, and assure Indian health program participation in Medicaid managed care programs; and
- WHEREAS,** the USET member Tribes have always maintained that a government-to-government relationship exists between the Federal government and federally recognized Indian Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** this unique relationship requires the Administration to consult with Indian Tribes on any policy and/or legislative matters that impact or may potentially impact Tribal communities, including health care reform policies and legislation; and
- WHEREAS,** Indian Tribes, as sovereign governments, must be granted maximum decision-making options in health care reform legislation; and

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- WHEREAS,** modern methods of health care delivery available in the mainstream health care system – such as home/community-based care, hospice, long-term care and assisted living – must be made available to the Indian health delivery system pursuant to the Federal trust responsibility for Indian health; and
- WHEREAS,** despite the Federal government's responsibility to provide health care to AI/ANs, Indian people continue to suffer health deficiencies far higher than the general U.S. population in most measures, including life expectancy; diabetes; tuberculosis; heart disease; alcoholism; and suicide; and
- WHEREAS,** meaningful Tribal involvement in health care reform development is essential to raising the health status of AI/AN people to the highest possible level; and, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** that the USET Board of Directors request that the Administration and Congress ensure that Indian Country has a seat at the table in the development and advancement of any health care reform legislation; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** that the United States' trust responsibility for Indian health obligates the Administration and Congress to assure that health care reform policies protect and enhance the Indian health delivery system and the access of Indian people to high-quality health care, and improve the health status of Indian people.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Semi-Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Marksville, LA, on Thursday, May 14, 2009.



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



Robert McGhee, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

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