



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SD-15-083

TITLE: Support for Adequate Funding and Expansion of the Quentin N. Burdick Indians into Medicine Program and Similar Programs Helping Native Americans and Alaska Natives Enter the Medical Professions

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NCAI HEADQUARTERS
1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005
202.466.7767
202.466.7797 fax
www.ncai.org

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, for many years there has been an acute shortage of medical professionals who are American Indians or Alaska Natives, both on and off of Indian reservations; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that if health care professionals are American Indians or Alaska Natives themselves, other American Indians and Alaska Natives are more willing to seek medical care, including preventive medicine, that will help save and extend lives in Indian Country; and

WHEREAS, the Indians Into Medicine Program (INMED) began in 1973 with a group of educators and other interested Native Americans who wanted to assist in recruiting and retaining American Indian and Alaska Native students who aspire to be health professionals to meet the needs of our Indian communities; and

WHEREAS, now the INMED program exists at several medical school locations, and assists students to both enter and stay in medical school and become medical doctors; and

WHEREAS, one branch of the program has been located at the University of North Dakota (UND) since its inception, with a satellite office at the University of South Dakota and is authorized to receive funds under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act through the Indian Health Service (IHS), in which it is known as the Quentin N. Burdick Indians Into Medicine Program, after the U.S. Senator from North Dakota who assisted in obtaining the initial funds for the program; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, the INMED program nationally has lost significant funding from IHS that has hampered the recruitment and retention of American Indians and Alaska Natives into the medical professions; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the loss of funds, INMED has suffered a loss of the ability to grant scholarships to promising students entering the medical profession, which, because of rising costs of medical school and other professional schools for professionals in the field of medicine, greatly limits the ability of Indian students to enter the medical profession; and

WHEREAS, the INMED program alone at UND has assisted more than 456 active doctors and other professionals in the medical field, and it is estimated that over one-half of the active American Indian or Alaska Native medical doctors graduated from the UND INMED program; and

WHEREAS, other programs similar to INMED have also been authorized and have started, including Indians into Psychology and Indians into Nursing; and

WHEREAS, costs of attending medical school continue to rise, and financial support for American Indians and Alaska Natives who wish to enter the medical professions is critical to the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) does hereby request Congress to appropriate for the INMED program for FY 2017 at least \$1,750,000, an increase of approximately \$1,000,000, and to increase that amount annually by more than \$200,000 for at least 10 years into the future to assist American Indians and Alaska Natives to enter and stay in the field of medicine as professionals and to provide scholarships for American Indians and Alaska Natives to attend professional schools in the medical field; and

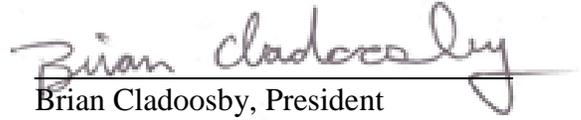
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby request Congress and the IHS to expand or create other programs to assist American Indians and Alaska Natives enter various medical professions, such as nursing, psychology, pharmacology and dentistry; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI supports further amendments to the Indian Health Care Improvement Act to authorize the INMED program to grant scholarships to promising American Indians and Alaska Natives who desire to enter the medical profession; or, in the alternative, that NCAI requests IHS, if it has the authority, to again provide authority to INMED programs to grant scholarships; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the General Assembly at the 2015 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA, October 18-23, 2015, with a quorum present.


Brian Cladoosby, President

ATTEST:


Aaron Payment, Recording Secretary