



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #FTL-04-039

**TITLE: Calling for Increased Access to the Veterans Health Administration/
Department of Veterans Affairs for American Indian/Alaska Native
Customers**

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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, over the last 90 years, American Indians and Alaska Natives have volunteered to serve in the United States Armed Forces to protect the United States at a higher rate than any other ethnic group of persons in the United States, and many have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their effort; and

WHEREAS, many more have served and come home to their Tribal Nations, but often, like any group of military veterans, they have lingering illnesses or injuries, or, as they age, they need specialized medical attention; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, as it does for other veterans, should be able to provide the medical attention or other services American Indian and Alaska Native veterans need, however, the services the Department of Veterans Affairs provides are often not available or are not used by Tribal members for various reasons; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has established a Native American Advisory Council to assist in the facilitation of increased access to the Veterans Health Administration and its services; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is encouraging American Indians and Alaska Natives to become employees of the Department, and at the same time wants to make sure American Indians and Alaska Natives employees of the Department are able to voice their concerns about how to improve the services of the Department to Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby call upon its members and member Tribes to work with the Native American Advisory Council of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to assist in the facilitation of increased access to the Veterans Health Administration and its services, both for American Indian and Alaska Native veterans as well as for those Tribal members who seek employment with the Department; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCAI calls upon the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to engage with Tribal veterans, its American Indian and Alaska Native employees, and other employees to help make the services of the Department of Veterans Affairs culturally relevant, more readily available and welcoming to American Indian and Alaska Native veterans.

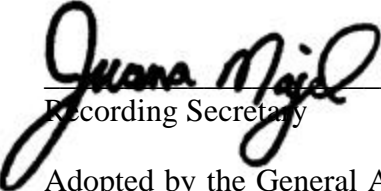
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 61st Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida on October 10-15, 2004 with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 2004 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held from October 10th to the 15th at the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.