



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

## The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SD-15-066

### **TITLE: Advancement of a Tribal Behavioral Health Agenda**

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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**, the NCAI has a vested interest in supporting and advancing the emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native people; and

**WHEREAS**, the high rates of behavioral health challenges among American Indian and Alaska Native people create an urgency for Tribes, federal agencies, and other stakeholders to partner in a manner that seeks to improve the health of all American Indians and Alaska Natives; and

**WHEREAS**, there is currently no one single, national document that elevates the importance of behavioral health for AI/AN people, identifies the collective priorities of Tribal communities related to behavioral health, and guides the development of/or incorporation of behavioral health-related actions intended to improve the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native youth, families, and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to create a blueprint for effectively addressing behavioral health, Tribal leaders, Tribal members and stakeholders from diverse sectors need to be meaningfully engaged so as to garner input and feedback on behavioral health priorities, goals, and recommendations; and

**WHEREAS**, it is vital that any such document reflect a respect for the inherent sovereignty of Tribal nations, and support the opportunities for exploration and implementation of strategies and solutions that are appropriate for their communities, align with their cultural values, and honors self-determination; and

**WHEREAS**, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the federal agency that has allocated staff and resources to serve as the federal lead in the development and creation of a blueprint for advancing behavioral health in Indian Country, and has partnered with the National Indian Health Board to assist with its development and dissemination.

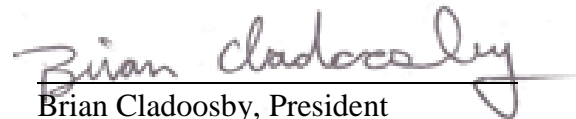
**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) calls upon Tribal leadership, partner organizations, and federal agencies to work collaboratively and offer support for the creation and implementation of the Tribal Behavioral Health Agenda; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCAI supports efforts to develop, disseminate, and implement a Tribal Behavioral Health Agenda that would advance the behavioral health for all American Indian and Alaska Native people; 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