

National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS



The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #SAC-06-002

TITLE: Support the National American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day held on March 21, 2007

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NCAI HEADQUARTERS

1301 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
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, American Indians and Alaska Natives have long experienced lower health status when compared with other Americans that includes a lower life expectancy and higher disease occurrence than other racial/ethnic groups due to inadequate education, disproportionate poverty, discrimination in the delivery of health services, and access to adequate and quality health; and

WHEREAS, the spread of HIV/AIDS virus among American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians poses a significant risk to the public health and well-being of these communities; and

WHEREAS, American Indians/Alaska Natives had the 3rd highest rate of AIDS diagnoses in 2004, despite having the smallest population; and

WHEREAS, through June 2004 the cumulative reported AIDS cases for American Indians/Alaska Natives was 3,084 and reported cases for HIV infection (not AIDS) was 1068; and

WHEREAS, data presented for Hawaiian/Part Hawaiian represent 8.6% of the Hawaii population and account for 11% (302) of the total reported AIDS cases as of June 30, 2005 and the proportion of Hawaiian cases has increased from 10.7% before July 1995 to 13% during the period from July 2000 – June 2005; and

WHEREAS, from 2000 through 2004, the estimated number of deaths among persons with AIDS decreased among whites, blacks, and Asian/Pacific Islanders but increased among American Indians/Alaska Natives; and



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WHEREAS, American Indians and Alaska Natives constitute less than 1% of the total HIV/AIDS cases causing the disproportionate impact of this disease to garner national attention and public health effort; and

WHEREAS, the abovementioned rates and statistics are held suspect and are believed to be much higher than the true rates of infection and death which are underreported due to lack of access to medical diagnosis, misclassification, and/or poor reporting; and

WHEREAS, there is potential for a great increase of HIV/AIDS in American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian communities, as evidenced by several co-risk factors such as high rates of sexually transmitted disease in our communities (i.e. gonorrhea, syphilis, and Chlamydia), poverty, social stigma (i.e. discrimination, racism, homophobia), high substance abuse rates; and

WHEREAS, the status of HIV/AIDS epidemic among American Indian and Alaska Native people is a public health crisis that requires a focused national effort to bring attention to the prevention needs of American Indian people and to raise the awareness of the American public, the Administration, the Congress, and public health agencies of this issue.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support the National American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian HIV/AIDS Awareness Day in its efforts to bring tribal and national awareness of HIV/AIDS among Native peoples to prevent its spread and to encourage HIV/AIDS testing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI encourages all Native, as well as national and regional Native organizations to work together to develop strategies and commit the necessary resources to bring this effort to fruition; 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 2006 63rd Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Sacramento Convention Center in Sacramento, California on October 1-6, 2006, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary

