**RESOLUTION #**

**Northwest Health Foundation Funding for Dental Therapy Legislation in Oregon**

**WHEREAS**, the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (herein after “NPAIHB” or the “Board”) was established in 1972 to assist Tribal governments to improve the health status and quality of life of Indian people; and

**WHEREAS**, the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board is a “tribal organization” as defined by the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (P.L. 93-638 seq. et al) that represents forty-three federally recognized tribes in the states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington (“member tribes”); and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the definitions of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act at 25 USCS § 450b, a tribal organization is recognized as a governing body of any Indian tribe and includes any legally established organization of Indians which is controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by such governing body or which is democratically elected by the adult members of the Indian community to be served by such organization and which includes the maximum participation of Indians in all phases of its activities; and

**WHEREAS**, the NPAIHB is dedicated to assisting and promoting the health needs and concerns of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) people; and

**WHEREAS**, the primary goal of the NPAIHB is to improve the health and quality of life of its member tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Northwest Health Foundation has invited the NPAIHB to apply for a grant to advocate for legislation to make dental therapists available to underserved and underrepresented communities, especially tribal communities in Oregon; and

**WHEREAS**, the NPAIHB has partnered with tribes in Oregon to pilot the expansion of the dental team to include dental health aide therapists (DHATs) as part of the Oregon Dental Pilot Project Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the goal of the Oregon Dental Pilot Project Program is to encourage the development of innovative practices in oral health care delivery systems with a focus on providing care to populations that evidence-based studies have shown have the highest disease rates and the least access to dental care; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities are struggling under the weight of devastating oral health disparities, including:

* Prevalence of tooth decay in AI/AN children ages 2-5 is nearly three times the U.S. average. More than 70% of AI/AN children ages 2-5 years have a history of tooth decay experience compared to 23% of white children;
* AI/AN adult dental patients suffer disproportionately from untreated decay, with twice the prevalence of untreated caries as the general U.S. population and more than any other racial/ethnic group;
* AI/AN adult dental patients are also more likely to have severe periodontal disease, more missing teeth, and are more likely to report poor oral health than the general U.S. population; and

**WHEREAS**, to address these disparities, the NPAIHB has worked closely with tribes in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho to expand the dental team to include DHATs; and

**WHEREAS**, expanded dental teams with DHATs have proven effective in tribal and other underserved communities in increasing access to care, allowing dentists and other providers to work at the top of their scope, and improving population oral health; and

**WHEREAS**, DHATs have proven to be associated with significantly improved health outcomes in Alaska Native communities; and

**WHEREAS**, permanent changes to the state law in Oregon will be necessary to ensure that Tribes and other communities have access to DHATs.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board supports the grant application to the Northwest Health Foundation requesting up to $20,000 to fund advocacy for dental health aide therapy legislation in Oregon.