



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Edward K. Thomas Building
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CENTRAL COUNCIL OF TLINGIT & HAIDA INDIAN TRIBES OF ALASKA
Eighty-Sixth Annual Tribal Assembly
October 1, 2021
Juneau, Alaska

Resolution TA 21-07

Title: Support for Congressional Legislation to Improve Public Health Data Access Among
Tribal Epidemiology Centers

By: Seattle Tlingit & Haida Community Council

WHEREAS, the Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is a federally recognized tribe with more than 32,000 citizens; and

WHEREAS, concern about the lack of sufficient public health surveillance and data for disease control for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations made way for Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs) to be established under the reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA) in 1996; and

WHEREAS, since 1996, TECs have provided epidemiology and public health functions critical to the delivery of healthcare and public health services for the Indian health care system comprised of Indian Health Service (IHS) Direct, Tribal 638, and Urban Indian Health Program (UIHP); and

WHEREAS, today the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center serves Alaska Native communities across the IHS Alaska Area and the Urban Indian Health Institute serves AI/AN people living in urban areas nationwide; and

WHEREAS, Tlingit & Haida's citizens reside in villages and urban communities in Alaska and throughout the United States and rely on the work of TECs for data, evaluation, and research services that support the healthcare and public health needs of tribal and urban Indian communities; and

WHEREAS, TECs were designated as public health authorities in 2010 by the permanent reauthorization of S. 1790: Indian Health Care Improvement Act in Title X Part III of PL 111–148: Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; and

WHEREAS, that congressional authorization allows TECs to access to Health and Human Services (HHS) data as public health authorities; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) both delayed access to COVID-19 Case Surveillance Data and continues to deny TECs access to other public health data such as the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS); and

WHEREAS, a failure to grant timely and consistent data access perpetuates systemic health inequities in tribal and urban AI/AN communities because analysis of NNDSS data and other CDC collected COVID-19 data is critical to prevent, prepare, and respond to both current and future surges of COVID-19 using data-driven decision-making; and

WHEREAS, most data on AI/AN populations are collected and maintained by non-indigenous entities including city, county, state, and federal public health entities that create fragmented data systems about AI/AN people and communities; and

WHEREAS, TECs are uniquely qualified as public health authorities and therefore best positioned to advise and lead the appropriate collection and analysis of AI/AN health data and must be allowed to fully operate as public health authorities alongside local, state, and federal entities by upholding their statutory roles and authorities; and

WHEREAS, TECs continue to advocate for public health data sharing among CDC, States, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and TECs to ensure access to AI/AN public health data to inform healthcare and public health practices, programs, and policies that strengthen the health of Native communities; and

WHEREAS, S. 1397: Tribal Health Data Improvement Act of 2021 expands data sharing among the CDC, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and TECs would ensure tribal and urban Indian communities can utilize nationwide data to help guide their public health decision-making to reduce health disparities among tribal citizens regardless of where they reside;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Eighty-Sixth Tribal Assembly of Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska delegation convened October 1, 2021, hereby supports the passage and enactment of S.1397: Tribal Health Data Improvement Act of 2021; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Tlingit & Haida President shall send letters in support of the bills to the Alaska delegation in Washington, D.C.

ADOPTED this 1st day of October 2021, by the Eighty-Sixth Tribal Assembly of Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska.

CERTIFY



President Richard J. Peterson

ATTEST



Tribal Secretary Ralph Wolfe