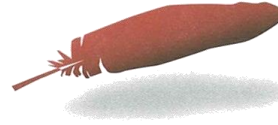


# National Indian Health Board



## National Indian Health Board Resolution 23 – 05

### Support for Standard Coverage of Oral Health Care Services under Medicaid

**WHEREAS**, the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), established in 1972, serves all federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Tribal governments by advocating for the improvement of health care delivery to AI/ANs, as well as upholding the federal government's trust responsibility to AI/AN Tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the NIHB has a strong history of advancing the well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native people through the support of regulatory and Congressional action, advocacy for increased funding for healthcare in Indian Country, creation of national venues to discuss health issues, and creation of educational and programmatic materials for Tribal public health professionals; and

**WHEREAS**, Congress created Medicaid in 1965 as a public health insurance program to guarantee health care availability to impoverished Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, Medicaid currently covers nearly 90 million Americans, including 1.8 million American Indians and Alaska Natives, one in every four Native people; and

**WHEREAS**, Medicaid is a joint partnership between the federal and state governments, with the federal government enacting universal minimum services that must be covered and state governments deciding which services above the minimum are eligible for reimbursement; and

**WHEREAS**, the federal minimum dental health benefit for Medicaid enrollees provides dental benefits for Medicaid enrollees under the age of 21, but no minimum requirements for dental benefits for enrollees over the age of 21; and

**WHEREAS**, Medicaid coverage of dental insurance varies from state to state, with states offering comprehensive 35 adult dental benefits, 12 states offering only emergency adult dental benefits, and 3 states offering no adult dental benefit; and

**WHEREAS**, American Indian and Alaska Natives of all age groups have disproportionately high levels of untreated oral health decay; and

**WHEREAS**, oral health is intricately linked to overall health, with significant amounts of research pointing to connections between poor oral health and increased risk of heart disease, lung disease, stroke, and diabetes; and

**WHEREAS**, at the direction of the Tribes, NIHB has long supported legislative action to improve consistent quality oral health access among American Indians and Alaska Natives;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that NIHB calls for Congress to create a comprehensive federal minimum dental benefit under Medicaid, requiring all state Medicaid programs to offer adult dental benefits for enrollees; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NIHB calls for Congress to include in the federal minimum dental benefit regular preventative services, comprehensive restorative services, dentures, and emergency care; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NIHB calls for Congress to ensure eligible American Indians and Alaska Natives receive said benefit at no additional cost in pursuance of the trust responsibility.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of the National Indian Health Board until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with quorum present, on the 22nd day of June, 2023.

ATTEST:



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Chairperson, William Smith



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Vice Chairperson, Nickolaus Lewis