



## NATIONAL INDIAN HEALTH BOARD

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### “Healing Our Spirits Worldwide 2002”

Greetings Fellow Convenors:

I am writing to express our desire to serve as a co-sponsor for the, “Healing Our Spirits Worldwide 2002 Conference”. While we were disappointed to learn that organizers from the Philippines will be unable to host the 2002 Conference, we want to reconfirm our interest in helping to sponsor this event.

It is my recollection, that when the representatives to the Spirit of 1998 Management Committee met in Rotorua, New Zealand, at the conclusion of the February 1998 Conference to decide on a future site for the 2002 conference, that the Philippines secured the most votes and the United States was a second choice. It was further determined that in the event the Philippines were unable to host the conference, that it would be the responsibility of Tribal Leaders in the United States to host the conference in 2002. We are excited at this prospect and are in the process of establishing a Management Committee for 2002.

On behalf of the 558 Tribal Governments we serve, I hope you will consider our request to cosponsor the next International Gathering of Indigenous Peoples of the World in 2002. In addition to the Tribes, we work closely with a number of national organizations, including the National Congress of American Indians, the Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee and the National Council of Urban Indian Health, as well as issues-based Indian organizations and non-Indian national public health organizations, who might have an interest in hosting this event. To enlist support in Canada and Mexico, we would be happy to work with the Assembly of First Nations and indigenous groups from Mexico.

It would be our desire to work with an Advisory Committee, comprised of the co-sponsors to the 2002 Conference, to select a site most convenient for international travelers. We have had extensive experience in conference planning and would recommend a location in the Southwest or Pacific Rim to enable air, sea and/or highway travel, possibly in San Diego or San Francisco, California, Phoenix or Tucson, Arizona, Portland, Oregon, or Seattle, Washington.

We hope to enlist those of you who wish to volunteer your expertise as we move forward in the planning process for 2002. We are all looking forward to the exciting times ahead and the friendships that will be forged during this time of planning and through completion of the conference.

I regret that I cannot attend the meeting in Hawaii. The weekend selected for the meeting conflicts with a family wedding. Despite my absence, I will rely on my friends, Joe De La Cruz and Henry Cagey to provide you with answers to the critical questions you might have regarding our interest in the 2002 event. If you have further questions or concerns, please feel free to call me or our Executive Director, Yvette Joseph-Fox at (303) 759-3075.

Sincerely Yours,



Buford L. Rolin  
Chairman

# Healing Our Spirits Worldwide

## The Fourth Conference

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### **What is Healing Our Spirits Worldwide?**

Healing Our Spirits Worldwide is an Indigenous movement which began in Canada in the 1980's to address the devastation of chemical abuse and dependence among Indigenous people around the world. The effort in the past has been to address the underlying issues and difficulties that predispose this particular behavior among Indigenous people. Three international meetings have been held focusing on Indigenous approaches being employed by different Indigenous communities in their respective countries. The meetings have been held on average once every four years. The last meeting was in New Zealand in February of 1998.

### **What is planned for the fourth conference?**

A November preliminary meeting in Hilo, Hawaii, designated the United States and Canada to jointly sponsor the fourth international conference. The first full planning session is scheduled for the week of January 24-28, 2000 in Phoenix, Arizona, USA. The Healing Our Spirits Worldwide conference is scheduled for the spring of 2002 and will be held in Southwestern, United States. Location and content of the 2002 conference will be finalized at the January meeting.

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### **Who to contact:**

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### **Who will participate?**

The participants in previous meetings have included a wide range of community and national representatives from many countries. Men and women of all ages from different Indigenous backgrounds have made the conference a spectacular event linking many traditional communities and successes. Health professionals, community organizers, elders, youth, government policy-makers, tribal community leadership, recovering individuals, economic and financial experts, and traditional healers have contributed to the presentations and gatherings. As many as 6000 participants have attended past meetings.

### **What is needed?**

Partnerships with parties interested in the health assessment and needs of Indigenous people, particularly, behavioral health needs, are desired to assist in making this conference as broadly participatory as possible. Many worthy and meritorious efforts have gone unshared because of an inability to collaborate. Others in need of ideas have been unable to confront concerns with effective interventions because of an inability to participate in past conferences. Partnerships with programs of proven impact and with entities who can provide technical support to Indigenous communities are desired.

### **Coming Soon:**

*Healing Our Spirits Worldwide* webpage