



SOUTHERN PLAINS TRIBAL HEALTH BOARD

Serving Tribes and Indian Organizations throughout Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas since 1972

RESOLUTION NO. 2016- 17

PURPOSE: A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE “NON-INDIAN COMMUNITY” TERM BEING REMOVED FROM THE SANITATION DEFICIENCY SYSTEM (SDS)

WHEREAS, the Southern Plains Tribal Health Board (SPTHB) since 1972 serves as a unified voice for health related interests of 43 federally recognized tribes situated in the Oklahoma City Area Indian Health Service region encompassing the states of Kansas, Oklahoma and a portion of Texas and;

WHEREAS, the SPTHB recognizes that American Indian people suffer greater health disparities than others living in Oklahoma. The top leading causes of death among Indians in Oklahoma are heart disease, cancer, unintentional injuries and diabetes.

WHEREAS, the historic allocations of resources appropriated to all Indian health systems have created a disparity and underfunding for the Oklahoma Area compared to all other Areas in the United States. The Oklahoma Area has been in the bottom 25% of all Indian Health Areas and consistently rates as one of the lowest funded Areas within the IHS system.

WHEREAS, the SPTHB supports the SDS’s purpose of the guidelines which states “This guideline is intended to ensure uniform standards and procedures are applied for identifying deficiencies and for developing projects to address them in all IHS Areas;” and

WHEREAS, the Interpretation of policy by Indian Health Service has led to the practice of prioritizing Sanitation and Facilities Construction (SFC) projects that are biased against eligible homes in the Oklahoma City Area (OCA) who are in need of water and sanitation services; and

WHEREAS, the interpretation lowers the Deficiency Level (DL), assigns fewer points to the project, and determines whether the project is funded or even if the project is reported to Congress as a ‘need.’ The DL of a project should only be associated with the deficiency of the sanitation facility itself. An arbitrary definition of “non-Indian community” should not have any bearing on the DL since the DL is to report the sanitation condition of a facility.

WHEREAS, due to the unique history of Indian lands in Oklahoma, the vast majority of American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) to be served in Oklahoma live on scattered sites, which are

interspersed with non-Indian homes. This arbitrary labeling as “non-Indian” communities is inappropriate as these families are equally eligible for the program. All IHS funds only go to eligible AI/AN homes and all projects are pro-rated appropriately, irrespective of which community the AI/AN eligible homes are located.

WHEREAS, P.L. 94-437 and Appendix E of the 2003 SDS Guideline reference deficiency levels with sanitation systems/facilities and do not associate the DL with the type of community. The interpretation at IHS to lower SDS projects based on ethnic profiles rather than sanitation facility deficiencies substantially disadvantages Oklahoma and the AI/AN we serve.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The “non-Indian community” term should be removed from the Guideline, because the purpose of the Guideline is to uniformly apply standards and procedures for identification of deficiencies in sanitation systems for Native Americans; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the SPTHB recommends that the IHS remove the “non-Indian community” term from the Guideline so as to not negatively affect the IHS OCA projects.

CERTIFICATION

Voted on and affirmed this 30 day of November, 2016 with the following voting FOR: 6 and AGAINST: and ABSTAIN: .

ATTESTED BY:

<u>Marty Wafford</u>	<u>11-30-16</u>
Chair	Date

<u>Teresa Jackson</u>	<u>11-30-16</u>
Vice-Chair	Date

<u>Nicolas Barton</u>	<u>11-30-16</u>
Secretary	Date

<u>Lisa Pivec`</u>	<u>11-30-16</u>
Treasurer	Date