

The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

A Resolution Establishing Support of H.R. 2759 Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015

Resolution No. 16-03



WHEREAS, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes (ITC) is an organization that unites the Tribal Governments of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole Nations, representing over 500,000 Indian people throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, the ITC 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, H.R. 2759, Mental Health Improvement Act of 2015 would amend Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of marriage and family therapist services and mental health counselor services under Part B of the Medicare program; amends Medicare Part E to exclude such services from the skilled nursing facility prospective payment system; and Authorizes Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists and Licensed Professional Counselors to develop discharge plans for post-hospital services

WHEREAS, H.R. 2759, Mental Health Improvement Act of 2015 seeks to increase access and improve quality of care by enabling Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Marriage Family Therapists to provide patient care services as consistent with their education, training, competencies and clinical license. Enabling these providers to practice and be reimbursed for services within the scope of their education, training, competencies, and participate fully as an integral part the patient's health care team will improve health outcomes and greatly benefit our patient populations.

WHEREAS, H.R. 2759, Mental Health Improvement Act of 2015 promotes increased access to care for underserved beneficiaries in Medically

Underserved Areas, Medically Underserved Populations, and Health Professional Shortage Areas, as designated by the Health Resources Services Administration. As the shortage of primary care physicians increases, so too will the challenges that patients in underserved communities face, especially those related to access. This legislation can help address provider shortages and access issues in underserved areas.


WHEREAS, H.R. 2759, Mental Health Improvement Act of 2015 promotes cost-effective health care by increasing access to care and opportunities for early intervention at cost-effective settings so as to minimize long-term health care costs such as those associated with preventable higher-cost conditions.

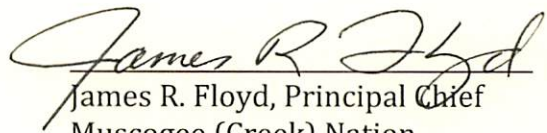
WHEREAS, the ITC supports the passage of H.R. 2759, Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015 to provide for the coverage of Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Marriage Family Therapists under Part B of the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

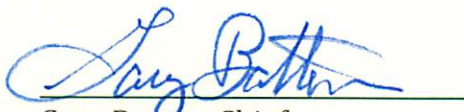
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes is in support of the passage of H.R. 2759, Mental Health Access Improvement Act of 2015.

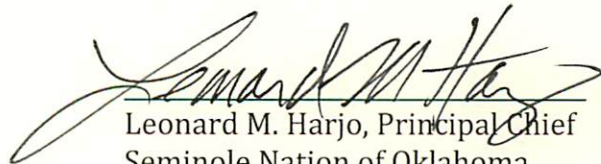
CERTIFICATION

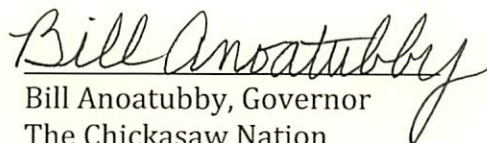
The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma on this 8th day of January, 2016, by a vote of All for 0 against and 0 abstentions.


Bill John Baker, Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation


James R. Floyd, Principal Chief
Muscogee (Creek) Nation


Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma


Leonard M. Harjo, Principal Chief
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma


Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation