

The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

A Resolution Urging the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to Hold Formal Tribal Consultations on Proposed Closures of VA Health Clinics that are located on tribal reservations

Resolution No. 22-09



Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief

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 Nation, representing approximately 815,000 Indian people throughout the United States; and



Bill Anoatubby
Governor

WHEREAS, through treaties, statutes, executive orders, and other legal agreements and laws, the United States took on many legal and moral obligations to Indian people in exchange for hundreds of millions of acres of land; and



Gary Batton
Chief

WHEREAS, Executive Order 13175 charges all executive departments and agencies with engaging in regular, meaningful, and robust consultation with Tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have Tribal implications; and



David W. Hill
Principal Chief

WHEREAS, President Biden's January 2021 "Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships" reaffirms this policy; and



Lewis J. Johnson
Chief

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) vows to consult with Tribal governments "in order to facilitate tribal engagement and input in VA policies, programs and services that may affect Veterans living in Indian Country and tribal governments"; and

WHEREAS, when addressing Tribal leaders at the White House Tribal Nations Summit in November 2021, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said "my commitment to you is that we won't make any decisions about you without you"; and

WHEREAS, weeks before McDonough made those comments, VA suddenly announced it planned to close a high-performing clinic in Vinita, OK, which resides in the Cherokee Nation Reservation, without hosting the required consultation with impacted tribes; and

WHEREAS, closing any VA Clinic is a disservice to the many veterans, Indian and non-Indian, who have served valiantly in the Armed Forces of the United States and who greatly benefit from vital VA health clinic services, and measurably decreases many veterans' ability to receive quality healthcare; and

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NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes calls on the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to adhere to the letter and spirit of Executive Order 13175 and engage in a formal Tribal consultation with any tribe whose reservation lands include VA health clinics before making any decisions impacting Native veterans or services.

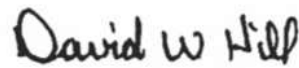
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Inter-Tribal Council urges the VA to reconsider its decision to close the VA clinic in Vinita, OK, and instead seek options that would expand services for veterans in this area.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes meeting virtually on this 14th day of January, 2022, by a vote of 22 for 0 against and 0 abstentions.



Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation



David W. Hill, Principal Chief
Muscogee (Creek) Nation



Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation


Brian T. Palmer (Jan 20, 2022 13:28 CST)

Lewis J. Johnson, Chief
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma