

A RESOLUTION

CALLING ATTENTION TO THE STATE OF EPIDEMIC OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES IN THE PACIFIC AND CALLING FOR INCREASED SUPPORT TO EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM.

WHEREAS on May 24, 2010, in American Samoa, the Pacific Islands Health Officers Association (PIHOA) passed Resolution 48-01, "*Declaring a Regional State of Health Emergency Due to the Epidemic of Non-Communicable Diseases in the United States-Affiliated Pacific Islands*"; and

WHEREAS Resolution 48-01 states that the leading causes of morbidity and mortality for adults in the USAPI (U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands) are from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, depression, injury, and arthritis and gout; and

WHEREAS the rates of NCDs and their risk factors in the USAPI are among the highest in the world, are rapidly increasing, are epidemic, and include high tobacco use, high alcohol consumption, a genetic predisposition towards obesity, significant environmental and behavioral health barriers to healthy eating and healthy families, a propensity toward injury, and a high prevalence of sedentary lifestyles; and

WHEREAS NCDs cause a significant loss in longevity, quality of life, and loss to workforce productivity in the USAPI and the NCD burden can be expected to worsen significantly over the next generation; and

WHEREAS Resolution 48-01, further indicates that a significant majority of the USAPI health care budgets are consumed by the management and treatment of NCDs which impedes economic growth and prosperity, due to a sicker workforce and the economic drain of related health care in the USAPI; and

WHEREAS the local, national, and international funding for NCDs is inadequate and the annual health care budgets for the USAPI cannot sustain or manage the costs of an epidemic of NCDs; and

WHEREAS the USAPI medical systems—given the current and rising rates of NCD are unable to manage the health complications of NCDs effectively due to the high cost and infrastructure required for end stage treatment, which include dialysis, cancer surgery, cancer chemotherapy and radiation therapy, intensive cardiac care for hospitalized patients, specialty stroke units, and sub-specialty medical care; and

WHEREAS many residents of the USAPI migrate to other parts of the USAPI and to the United States for medical care that cannot be accessed locally, and this medical migration (causes) stresses due to separation and financial strain; and

WHEREAS Resolution 48-01 further finds that many NCDs are preventable and have fewer complications with early intervention and many of the risk factors for NCDs can be effectively alleviated with known strategies and models of care; and

WHEREAS with respect to addressing the NCDs epidemic, Resolution 48-01 further finds that the current approach to NCD prevention and control in the USAPI is inadequate and generally ineffective for a variety of reasons and the USAPI community infrastructure necessary for effective health is not adequate for the challenge of controlling NCDs; and

WHEREAS the findings made by PIHOA in Resolution 48-01, with respect to USAPIs, are all substantiated by the 2008-2013 Public Health Strategic Plan; and

WHEREAS inadequate response to the epidemic of NCDs in Pacific and member states of the Micronesian Traditional Leaders Conference, will also contribute to inability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by effecting health and economic development, as stated in PIHOA Resolution 48-01; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, the Council of Chiefs support the actions in PIHOA Resolution 48-01, with respect to: (a) the Regional Policy on NCDs and (b) Collaboration with other associations that are not commonly considered health-related, whose work has significant or potential impact on NCDs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that national strategies that can have direct impact on reducing the risk factors for NCDs, such as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) for the reduction of tobacco use which has been identified by the WHO as the number one risk factor for NCDs, be implemented and that existing laws and regulations regarding alcohol consumption be strongly enforced; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that community leaders and parents work together within the community to reduce the risk for NCDs among adults, for their own health, and also in order to provide good role model for the prevention of underage drinking, use of tobacco and poor dietary habits among the youth; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that achievement of the Millennium Development Goals serves as additional impetus for addressing the epidemic of NCDs in Palau.

Adopted this 24th day of November 2010.