



Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board Inc.

Tóhajiilee Band of Navajos * Jicarilla Apache Nation * Mescalero Apache Tribe
Ramah Band of Navajos * Southern Ute Indian Tribe * Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THE ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH BOARD DECLARES RACISM AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND SUPPORTS THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

Albuquerque, NM (August 20, 2020)—Since first contact, our Indigenous communities have remained resilient through years of genocide and oppression enforced by settler colonialism. This story of resilience is echoed by the story of the African American community as our communities share in the grief of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless individuals lost at the hands of police brutality and racism. In a time when our country feels divided to many, the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board (AAIHB) chooses unity over division by declaring racism in all its forms as a public health crisis and by showing our support for the health of our Black and Black-Indigenous colleagues, friends, and families.

AAIHB was established in 1977 and incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1980. The mission of AAIHB is to advocate on behalf of American Indians through the delivery of quality health care services, which honor spiritual and cultural values. AAIHB is composed of representatives of six Tribes in New Mexico and Southern Colorado – TóHajiilee Navajo, Ramah Navajo, Mescalero Apache, Jicarilla Apache, Ute Mountain Ute, and Southern Ute. For the past four decades, AAIHB has served as a leader in the provision of culturally appropriate health services delivery, research, training, and technical assistance.

On July 10, 2020, the AAIHB Board of Directors passed Resolution 20-31 “To Declare Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Support the Black Lives Matter Movement” (attached). This resolution establishes an Anti-Racism Workgroup made up of staff, Board of Directors, and partners to develop an implementation plan to incorporate Anti-Racism principles in the work of AAIHB and the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (AASTEC) and identify other resources and services to help dismantle racism. The workgroup is AAIHB’s next step in addressing racism by first implementing anti-racism principles and working toward dismantling the systems of oppression that we have seen impact the health of our communities and the Black/African American community. In such an important time, AAIHB recognizes that silence is complicity and we cannot allow racism to continue to take the lives of our Black and Black-Indigenous relatives.

Over the next few months and years, we are calling on our partners to join us in our Anti-Racism efforts, to engage in discussions about racism, systems of oppression, colonialism, and how we can collectively work toward a just and equitable society that values the lives of Black, Indigenous and People of Color. AAIHB stands for equity and inclusion, we stand in solidarity with all our relatives, and as such we believe that Black Lives Matter. If you would like to know more about our anti-racist efforts toward decolonization, please contact us, so that we might include you in our efforts.

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