

NATIONAL CAUCUS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS

IMPROVING NEWBORN OUTCOMES TO REDUCE RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV) IN NATIVE AMERICAN, ALASKA NATIVE AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN POPULATIONS

The National Caucus of Native American State Legislators (NCNASL) is made up of American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian State Legislators from 18 states and is organized to provide a forum for discussion, education and increased communication. Additionally, the NCNASL identifies and proposes legislation and administrative actions to eliminate barriers to achievement of a better quality of life for Native people.

WHEREAS Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is the most common cause of severe lower respiratory tract disease among infants and young children under two years of age; and

WHEREAS RSV can cause respiratory illness throughout life, especially among those at high risk for lung infections; and

WHEREAS it is estimated that 75,000 to 125,000 children are hospitalized due to RSV annually and approximately 0.2 percent to 7 percent of these children die each year; and

WHEREAS American Indians and Alaska Natives have a higher risk of hospitalizations associated with RSV infection; and

WHEREAS RSV causes an estimated 34 hospitalizations per 1,000 births for American Indian and Alaska Native infants and 27 per 1,000 for the general U.S. infant population; and

WHEREAS compared to the U.S. average, American Indian and Alaska Native infants are approximately 26 percent more likely to be hospitalized due to RSV; and

WHEREAS American Indian and Alaska Native infants living in the Alaska and Southwest regions were hospitalized for RSV at 159 percent and 76 percent higher rates, respectively, than the average U.S. infant; and

WHEREAS respiratory system diseases account for a large proportion of hospitalizations in American Indian and Alaska Native children; and

WHEREAS within Hawaii, the incidence of RSV is highest among Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander children compared with children of other race groups; and

WHEREAS children born prematurely as well as those with chronic lung disease or congenital heart disease are at highest risk for severe disease and hospitalization due to RSV, and

WHEREAS the lack of running water and household crowding increases the risk of RSV;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE NATIONAL CAUCUS OF NATIVE AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATORS, that the inherent sovereignty of Tribes as recognized through

historical treaties and legal relationships that exist between Tribal Nations and the United States of America is undeniable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators urges state Medicaid programs to provide appropriate therapy and treatment for tribal members in order that they be provided with optimal care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Health and Wellness Committee of the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators will examine a legislative agenda to address RSV and make recommendations regarding funding levels needed and potential sources to reduce the rates of RSV.

Sponsored by: Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair, Health and Wellness Committee

Approved Date is: September 25, 2009

Committee of Jurisdiction: Health and Wellness Committee

Certified by Committee Chair: Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair, Health and Wellness Committee

Certified by Caucus Chair: Rep. John McCoy, Washington

Ratified certified by: The National Caucus of Native American State Legislators, September 25, 2009.