

# Staying focused on making our tribal nation strong



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## ACA brings significant challenges — and opportunities

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) just held its annual Consumer Conference in Traverse City, Mich. I want to take this opportunity to thank Director Cathy Abramson, who is the chair of NIHB, for conducting a most important summit as we stand on the horizon of the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). There are significant challenges and opportunities coming our way and the conference provided tribal leaders up to the minute information, tools and resources in order to improve health care services for our tribal members. There is much to be done before

2014 deployment.

## Improved access to health service in DeTour and Drummond Island

For tribal members who reside in DeTour and Drummond Island: Please take a moment to read the announcement in this issue of the newspaper, explaining the improved access to lab and pharmacy services to your area. This is one small but significant step in meeting your health care needs. It has been an uphill effort, but access to quality health care is my number one priority. Hopefully, under provisions of the ACA, we will be able to improve service and increase our reach to all our tribal members.

## Governance, civics and the rules of law

At the Sept. 2 board of directors meeting, I will face a preliminary hearing regarding a petition for my 'removal from office.' Unfortunately, this unit report is due prior to the meeting, so I cannot report on the outcome until next month. But I am very calm in the fact that I have not broken any tribal laws or codes whatsoever. Still, it is a very sobering event—not only for myself but for the tribe as a whole. The legitimacy of

governments rest in the consent of the voters through elections. The petition for my removal had 108 signatures collected over six months. Of those signatures, only one resided in the Unit II district (seven more were registered Unit II voters from downstate Michigan). I'm not certain what motivated the petitioner to circulate this petition. Although I will stand tall against those who would accuse me of wrongdoing—I will also forgive them, because Unit II members were very clear in their instructions to me: Stop the destructive political nonsense and stay focused on making our tribal nation strong.

With that thought in mind, I would like to share this healing prayer by songwriter Pura Fe:

## All My Relations

*This is dedicated to our relatives before us: Our elders who teach us of our creation and our past:*

*To those who have kept their homelands*

*And to the nations extinct due to mass slaughter, slavery, deportations and diseases unknown to them*

*And to the ones who are subjected to the same treatment today*

*To the ones who survived the relocations and the ones who died along the way*

*To those who carried on traditions and lived strong among their people*

*To those who left their communities by force or by choice and through generations no longer know who they are*

*To those who search and never find*

*To those who that turn away the so called 'non-accepted'*

*To those who bring us together and those living outside, keeping touch, the voice for many.*

*To those who make it back to live and fight the struggles of their people*

*To those who give up and those who do not care.*

*To those who abuse themselves and others. And those who*

*revive again*

*To those who are physically, mentally or spiritually incapable by accident or by birth*

*To those who seek strength in our spirituality and ways of life and those who exploit it, even our own.*

*To those who fall for the lies and join the dividing lines that keep us fighting amongst each other*

*To the outsiders who step in, good or bad and those of us who don't know better.*

*To the leaders and prisoners of war, politics, crimes, race and religion, innocent or guilty*

*To the young, the old, the living and the dead.*

*To our brothers and sisters and all living things across Mother Earth and her beauty we've destroyed, and deny honor that the creator has given each individual. The truth that lies in our hearts:*

*All my relations.....*