

Toward Indians and Alaska Natives—

Anti-Discrimination Policy Statement Issued by DHEW

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare recently issued a policy statement to prevent discrimination against Indians and the Alaska Natives in health and medical services.

According to Carl Jack, Director, Health Affairs Division, AFN, Inc., the Secretary of DHEW, Casper W. Weinberger, issued a four-point procedure to ensure that Indians and Alaska Natives will not be deprived of their right to equal access to State, local and federal health-related services. The four points of the policy statement are:

1) Indians and Alaska Natives will have the same access as other citizens to receipt of medical services under a State plan

approved under any of the public assistance Titles of the Social Security Act, including Medicaid.

2) The eligibility of an Indian or other Native American, under the State's medical assistance plan or other public assistance plan, will not be affected by the use of services provided by Indian Health Service.

3) Under the approved assistance plan of the State, the State agency is responsible for meeting the cost to Native Americans to the same extent as provided other eligible individuals.

4) No recipient of federal financial assistance may refuse to certify as eligible or fail to provide health services to Indians or other

Native Americans, such as Alaska Natives, on grounds that Indian Health Services are available.

"The agreements signed on December 17, 1974, between the Office for Civil Rights, Indian Health Service, and Social Rehabilitation Services, should now be adhered to by changing the eligibility criteria under the General Relief Medical Program administered by the State of Alaska," said Mr. Jack.

"Otherwise, the State would be, as in the past, in direct violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits use of federal funds for programs which discriminate on the grounds of race, color, or national origin.."