

# First Alaskans Institute

FIRST ALASKANS INSTITUTE  
2022 ANNUAL ELDERS AND YOUTH  
RESOLUTION 22-01

**TITLE:** Sobriety Programs Incorporated Into Schools in Alaska

**WHEREAS:** The First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference is the largest statewide convening of Alaska Native Elders and youth representing our diverse Alaska Native cultures and language groups in order to enhance and perpetuate the unique spirits and identities of our people; and

**WHEREAS:** The purpose of the Elders and Youth Conference is to connect Elders and youth for cultural knowledge transmission, strengthen statewide relationships, amplify the power of participants as leaders today, and advance solutions such as these resolutions to challenges faced by our Native peoples and our communities; and

**WHEREAS:** Some children who grow up in rural areas are exposed to drugs and alcohol in the community at young ages. Adults engage in drug and alcohol abuse that effect youth. Drugs are seen as something that the “popular kids” are doing. The permanent effects of drug abuse are overlooked for temporary satisfaction because everyone else is doing it. Peer pressure affects many adolescents’ decisions; and

**WHEREAS:** There are few drug and alcohol programs in rural Alaska, people often have to travel to bigger cities like Anchorage-often at great personal expense. These programs are mainly for adults in rural Alaska and aren’t consistent enough to make an impact. The facilities are filled with strangers, are far away from home, costly, and it can be intimidating to an adolescent. These programs are largely not preventative. Treatment and support in our hometowns would be better for adolescents’ mental health. Adolescents are more inclined to seek help when it is with the support of their peers and family; and

**WHEREAS:** By the time adolescents realize they have a problem, they have either gotten in trouble with the law or have been hospitalized. They are scared of getting help because of common stigmas about what organizations may do with their information. It’s better to treat addiction before it becomes chronic and getting help becomes more difficult. Drug prevention education within schools only explains why youth shouldn’t do drugs or alcohol.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the participants of the 2022 First Alaskan Institute Elders and Youth, request the Alaska State Board of Education implement a sobriety prevention program into our high schools around Alaska that targets individual needs and educates on ways to quit and seek support.

Submitted by Aaron Stackhouse (Iñupiaq) and Kyra Chunhui Billings (Iñupiaq)

CONFERENCE ACTION: PASSED ON OCT. 19, 2022