CHEROKEE COUNCIL HOUSE
CHEROKEE, NORTH CAROLINA

DATE:_____

RESOLUTION NO.: _____

*A resolution to approve the research project entitled "Automatic External Defibrillators in Rural and American Indian and Alaskan Native Populations" by Audrey Blewer, Assistant Professor, Duke University*

WHEREAS, The Tribe's Medical Institutional Review Board (MIRB) has been assigned the task of reviewing health-related research requests made to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; and

WHEREAS, The MIRB has reviewed and approved a research request made by Audrey Blewer, Duke University, entitled "Automatic External Defibrillators in Rural and American Indian and Alaskan Native Populations"; and

WHEREAS, Cherokee Tribal EMS serves the Qualla Boundary and surrounding rural communities, including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and has identified challenges in community understanding of defibrillation and AED use, awareness of AED locations, and variation in available AED devices, which can affect training consistency and emergency response; and

WHEREAS, Cherokee Tribal EMS has secured grant and other funding to purchase 60 new Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) for Tribally managed buildings to ensure consistency in brand, appearance, and operation, and this research aligns with and strengthens the EMS mission to provide state-of-the-art pre-hospital care and community education to improve survival from cardiac arrest; and

WHEREAS, Cherokee Tribal Emergency Medical Services, under the leadership of Tribal EMS Chief Zach Stutts, has formally expressed strong support for this research and has committed to collaboration in recruitment, interviews, and community engagement activities; and

WHEREAS, early access to defibrillation significantly improves survival from out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA), yet bystander AED use nationally remains low at approximately 1–4%, and rural and American Indian/Alaska Native communities experience disproportionate cardiovascular disease burden and reduced likelihood of AED application; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this study is to identify gaps in Automated External Defibrillator (AED) knowledge, awareness, and training within rural and Tribal communities

and to co-develop, in partnership with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), an educational implementation roadmap to strengthen CPR and AED access, training, and innovative strategies; and

WHEREAS, the study will involve a minimum of 20 adult community members and key informants participating in voluntary semi-structured interviews and focus groups to assess community knowledge, barriers, and best practices related to CPR and AED training, with participants offered appropriate compensation; and

WHEREAS, the research includes safeguards to ensure voluntary participation, informed consent, protection of privacy and confidentiality, crisis response protocols, and adherence to Tribal data sovereignty standards; and

WHEREAS, the study is supported by the American Heart Association and includes collaboration with EBCI Public Health, Tribal EMS, and community leadership through a Community Advisory Board to ensure Tribal engagement and culturally respectful implementation; and

WHEREAS The Secretary of the Public Health and Human Services Division (PHHS) has reviewed the request and the MIRB's recommendations and has also given approval; and

WHEREAS, The researcher acknowledges that the EBCI has a non-exclusive license to all information obtained from this research. And all information obtained will be forwarded to the EBCI Secretary of PHHS for review and neither *Audrey Blewer* nor the Co-Investigators, *Leo Brothers and Megan Oakes*, will use this information in any manner not authorized or in violation of Tribal law.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Tribal Council of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, in Council assembled in which a quorum is present, Audrey Blewer, Assistant Director, Duke University is hereby granted permission to carry out the above-named research project as described in her MIRB-approved proposal, carrying out all follow-up and reporting as required by the Medical Institutional Review Board.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that all resolutions inconsistent with this resolution are hereby rescinded, and that this resolution shall become effective upon ratification by the Principal Chief.

*Submitted by: Sonya Wachacha, Secretary*
*EBCI Public Health and Human Services Division*
*on behalf of the EBCI Medical Institutional Review Board*