SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY
DECEMBER 14, 15 & 16, 2010, GATINEAU, QC

Resolution no. 85/2010

TITLE:	Income Assistance Support for First Nations Relocating for Medical Reasons
SUBJECT:	Health and Social Development
MOVED BY:	Chief Donavan Fontaine, Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba
SECONDED BY:	Chief Jerry Primrose, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, Manitoba
DECISION:	Resolution was referred to AFN executive by Chiefs-in-Assembly on December 16, 2010. Passed by the AFN Executive at a duly convened meeting on January 20, 2011

WHEREAS:

A. Many First Nations people are relocating to urban areas to access medical and social services not available on reserve, and are increasing in numbers.

B. The INAC National Income Assistance Manual states that "individuals, who are off a reserve for the primary purpose of any of the following, continue to be considered ordinarily resident: obtaining care not available on the reserve; accessing social services because no reasonably comparable service is available on reserve" (s.2.3.2).

C. According to s.2.3.2. if a person or family is eligible for INAC Income Assistance on a reserve, they are also eligible to continue to receive income assistance off a reserve.

D. Regional Income Assistance Manuals vary and indicate that in compliance with INAC's policies, they are not encouraged to support families who relocate for medical services for longer than 3 months, and they can only provide for food while continuing to support the house and utilities on reserve.

E. Implementation of the INAC National Income Assistance program at the Regional level is either non-compliant with the National Manual, or is not communicating to First Nations Income Assistance staff how people relocating to meet medical needs can be assisted through this program.

Certified copy of a resolution adopted on the 20th day of January, 2011 in Ottawa, Ontario

SHAWN A-IN-CHUT ATLEO, NATIONAL CHIEF

F. INAC and provincial governments are not ensuring a continuity of income assistance to First Nations people in need of income and medical care and that varying time gaps exists between when INAC income assistance is cut off and provincial assistance begins.

G. Such disruption of income assistance delivery leads to First Nations people begin caught in a cycle of poverty, stress and further ill health.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Direct the National Chief to meet with the Minister of Indian Affairs to develop a joint team to address the immediate resolution of this denial of income assistance services to First Nations people relocating to urban areas for medical reasons.

2. Support the AFN First Nations Income Assistance Working Group in moving on this issue to obtain immediate and effective resolution to meet the needs of First Nations peoples.

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SHAWN A-IN-CHUT ATLEO, NATIONAL CHIEF