



## Upcoming Delegates Meeting

### **March 12, 2026**

Delegates meetings will be a part of our 3-day Tribal-State monthly meetings; March Meetings will be hosted by the Chehalis Tribes

- Tuesday and Wednesday will be in-person at the Lucky Eagle Hotel and Casino. Exact location will be sent before the meetings.
- Thursday will be in person in the Gathering Room at the Chehalis Tribe Community Center located at 461 Secena Rd, Oakville WA 98568
- HOTEL INFO: For those that need to book lodging to attend the March meetings, we do have a block of rooms at the Lucky Eagle Casino & Hotel: 360-328-1836
  - 12888 188th Ave. SW, Rochester, WA
  - Use code: “0326AIHC” by phone or the direct link below. Dates of booking will allow guests to book in for a stay 3/10 – 3/13. Government threshold rate applies.
  - <https://book.rquest.com/onecart/wbe/offers/1838/LuckyEagle?offerCode=0326AIHC>

### **June 11, 2026**

Delegates meetings will be part of our 3-day Tribal-State monthly meetings. June Meetings will be hosted by Upper Skagit; more details to come.

## Upcoming Events

- **Tribal Assisters Annual Training Conference** – May 6-7, 2026; at the Muckleshoot Casino & Resort. More info available [here](#).



- **Governor's Indian Health Advisory Council (GIHAC) Meeting** - May 12, 2026; location TBD. More info to come.
- **Native Youth Leadership and Resiliency Summit** - week of June 22, 2026, at the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. Registration info is coming soon.
- **Biannual Tribal State Leaders Health Summit** - September 14-18, 2026. Location and registration TBD; more info to come. Download the Save the Date flyer [here](#).
- **Stay up to date on all upcoming events** - Check out the calendar on our website for upcoming meetings and events: <https://aihc-wa.com/calendar>

## From the Executive Director

Written by Vicki Lowe



In January, we implemented the new Tribal Health Statewide meeting schedule, condensing regular monthly and quarterly Tribal Health Meetings. I hope this has helped with freeing up more time on your schedule. I know it has really helped me with my schedule but also to focus on the different topics.

We are still working on the calendar invites. You should have received a three-day calendar hold each month for the second Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. People who don't regularly attend all the meetings were having difficulty finding the data and time for their meeting. Going forward, you will also receive an individual



calendar invite for each separate meeting. We will continue to use one Zoom link each day, except for the Health Care Authority MTM – they are still making the transition and will have a separate link for a while.

Once each quarter, we are hybrid, with an in-person component for the full three days. We are lucky to be hosted at the Chehalis Tribe this quarter. Tuesday, March 10 and Wednesday, March 11, we will be in a conference room at the hotel and Thursday, March 12th, we will be at the Chehalis Community Center (and Skateboard Park ☐). AIHC staff, consultants, and executive committee will mostly all be in person along with Kim Coombs and Caytee Cline from the Chehalis Tribes. We will have a couple of side tables with information about the different bodies of work AIHC is doing on your behalf. Hope you can join us virtually or in person.

## Tribal Public Health

### Immunizations



Written by Jessica McKee, MPH, PhD

The Commission has been participating in planning meetings for the Washington State Immunization Summit. [Registration](#) for the March 19<sup>th</sup> event is still open and you can participate either in person at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center or online via Zoom! We will be planning a Tribal Immunizations Summit for AIHC Summit Week, the second week of September.

The Commission developed a [\*\*Template Tribal Resolution Appointing Preferred Vaccination Schedules\*\*](#) for Tribes so they can adapt it and ensure that



clinical staff administer vaccinations consistent with the recommendations of identified medical professional organizations, Washington Department of Health, and the West Coast Health Alliance.

### Emergency Preparedness

Written by Jessica McKee, MPH, PhD

The Commission will be facilitating a Novel Bird Flu Outbreak Tabletop on 3/31 from 9am-12pm. Staff from Tribes are invited to register [here](#). This will be part of a two-part tabletop series coordinated by the American Indian Health Commission. Invitees include representatives from Washington Tribes, Urban Indian Health Programs, and select attendees from local health jurisdictions (LHJs) and Washington State Department of Health (DOH). The next tabletop in the series will include a wider audience. The Novel Bird Flu Policy and Governance Tabletop focuses on Tribes and Urban Indian Health Programs and will allow participants to assess who has authority, who has responsibility, and how decisions move across sovereign and state systems. This exercise provides a structured opportunity to strengthen cross-jurisdictional collaboration through examining how information, decisions, and resources move across jurisdictions and where there are gaps.

Infectious diseases know no jurisdictional borders. A novel bird flu outbreak would require a rapid, synchronized response across tribal, state, and local systems. Tribes have encountered challenges in past responses including unclear communication channels, inconsistent information sharing, and delays in accessing state-level resources. These issues reflect deeper system-level misalignments rather than isolated incidents and provide ample opportunity for improvement. This first exercise will be virtual, taking place in Zoom with the intent to complete the next tabletop in person later this year. There will be time to debrief following each exercise.



## Maternal and Family Health

Written by Heather Holzer

### MMR Presentations:

If you have not yet had a chance, please take a few minutes to review the [AIHC Addendum](#) to the Maternal Mortality Review Panel Report to the Legislator.

A screenshot of a Zoom meeting. At the top, there are five video thumbnails of participants: Cindy Gamble, Chelsea Bellon, MPH (sh...), Tyrone Peterson, JanMarie Ward, and Richard Parenteau. Below the thumbnails is a presentation slide with a dark green background. The slide features the AIHC logo on the left and a photograph of a woman in traditional Native American attire on the right. The text on the slide reads: "NATIONAL INDIAN HEALTH BOARD Tribal Lead Maternal Mortality Review Committee Convening February 18, 2026". Below this, it says "AMERICAN INDIAN HEALTH COMMISSION" and "Washington State's New 2025 Maternal Mortality Review Panel Report to the Legislature". At the bottom of the slide, it lists "American Indian Health Commission Addendum To The Washington State Department Of Health Maternal Mortality Review Panel Report To The Legislature" and includes the slogan "PIPING TOGETHER FOR WELLNESS" and "© AIHC 2025".

JanMarie Ward and Cindy Gamble have had the opportunity to present their findings from this addendum to the WA DOH Community Collaborative, the National Indian Health Board, and the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities.



## Native Youth Leadership and Resiliency Summit:

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe has signed on to host the upcoming Native Youth Summit, scheduled for the week of June 22. This will be open to WA State Tribal Youth, ages 12-26.

We are currently looking for a few more Native Youth representatives for our leadership and planning panel. Interested youth, ages 14-26, may submit their info [here](#) and we will contact them for an interview.

## Tribal Behavioral Health

### Behavioral Health Opioid Response



WASHINGTON TRIBAL OPIOID  
FENTANYL TASKFORCE

Written by Lisa Rey Thomas, PhD

The AIHC AI/AN Opioid Response/Continuum of Care Workgroup met September 9, October 14, and December 9, January 13, and February 10 in collaboration with the WA Health Care Authority (HCA) Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA). We had numerous presentations, sharing of resources, and impactful discussions. You can see the meeting notes and links to resources [here](#). We did not meet in November out of respect for Veteran's Day. The next meeting is March 13 with presentations and discussions, including:

- Presentation and discussion of the draft template for a Tribal resolution to



restrict/ban the sale of kratom and kratom produces on and/or near Tribal lands.

- Review and discussion of the workgroup priorities.
- New updates on the *For Our Lives* campaign from Desetel Hegge

The WA Tribal Opioid Response Task Force continued to meet as did the 5 workgroups:

- Continuum of Care
- Public Safety and the Justice System
- Community and Family Services
- Housing and Wrap Around Services
- Community Response

You can read more about this work by reading the [Washington State Tribal Opioid and](#)

[Fentanyl Response Task Force Report to the Legislature](#). You can also learn more about the Task Force by reading this [fact sheet](#).

Please note that we are currently planning on the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribal Opioid and Fentanyl Response Summit to be held the week of September 14, 2026, specific dates and location TBD.

We are working with OTA and the governor's office to fill the two seats on the Washington State Tribal Opioid and Fentanyl (WTOF) Taskforce for Native people with lived experience. The Dear Tribal Leader Letter will come out from HCA next week but you can find the application [here](#).

AIHC also attends opioid/fentanyl related meetings hosted by state agencies and other organizations to reduce duplication, increase collaboration, and ensure that



the voices of Native people are included. This allows AIHC to distribute critical and relevant resources for prevention, treatment, harm reduction/health promotion, and recovery supports for those impacted by the opioid public health crisis. Please also see our Tribal Opioid Resource Exchange (TORE) site [here](#).

## **Access to Healthcare Revenue**

Enhanced Tribal Assister Support Program



Written by Laura Kluever

The Tribal Assister Program is off to a strong start this year! We continue to grow, with new Tribal Assisters joining every month.



WAHBE provided an excellent listening session during the Winter Training, focusing on 1095-A's, Special Enrollment Periods, Conditional Eligibility and Appeals.

We are also deep in the planning stages for the Tribal Assister In-Service Training on May 6–7, 2026, with a Meet & Greet and scavenger hunt on May 5, hosted by the Muckleshoot Business Office. You can find more info on our website [here](#).

Right now, we are confirming presenters, drafting the agenda, and planning engaging activities for everyone.

This remains our only in-person training event each year, and it has always been both fun and highly informative. Last year, we welcomed more than 65 attendees, making it our largest Tribal Assister training to date. We hope to see even more Tribal Assistors join us this year.

Look for full updates in the next newsletter!

If your Tribal Assister team needs any support, please don't hesitate to reach out.

- Laura Kluever, AIHC Enhanced Tribal Assistors - [laura.kluever@aihc-wa.com](mailto:laura.kluever@aihc-wa.com)

## Legislation



The 2026 Washington State Legislative Session ends next week – look for a special newsletter update from us on all things leg session the week of March 16.

AIHC Tribal Data Legislation Efforts



Written by Heather Erb

During the 2026-2026 legislative session, the American Indian Health Commission drafted [HB 2685](#), a bill to codify components of the [Governor’s Indian Health Advisory Council \(GIHAC\) Tribal Data Sovereignty Checklist](#) which was adopted by Tribal leaders in 2024. Sadly, this bill did not pass this session. While we are disappointed, we are grateful for the tireless efforts of Tribal leaders who lobbied their legislators and to Representative Debra Lekanoff for seeing this bill through to the end.

But we are not giving up! In fact, we are more motivated ever to see Tribal data sovereignty codified in our state laws. AIHC will continue its efforts with Tribes to pass future legislation that includes the following provisions:

1. A requirement that GIHAC state agencies, in consultation with Tribes, develop **Tribal data policies** that address how the state: (1) protects Tribal data; and (2) provides Tribes access to their data located in state datasets;
2. A requirement to **notify Tribes of infectious diseases** occurring within their jurisdictions, so that Tribes can perform their governmental duty to protect the health and welfare of their people; and
3. A **public records exemption** for certain types of Tribal data held in GIHAC state agency datasets. This exemption is intended to protect Tribes from the harmful impacts caused by the disclosure of sensitive Tribal data.

We will continue to work with Tribes through various forums including the Association of Washington Tribes to lobby and educate our legislators and state agencies on the importance of passing this much needed legislation.

For more information, contact:



## Quarterly Newsletter 2026 – Edition 2 – March

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