

AIHC Secretary, Charlene Nelson, Shoalwater Bay Tribe



Charlene Nelson served for 10 years as Chairwoman of the Shoalwater Bay Tribe. She now directs the Shoalwater Bay Tribe's Pulling Together for Wellness (PTW), is on the PTW Leadership Advisory Committee (PTW-LAC) and serves as secretary of the American Indian Health Commission. She enjoys storytelling, reading, preaching, and beach walking.

Charlene worked 25 years in education first as an aide until she finished her degree in education at 43.

She then went on to teach at the elementary school level. During summer vacations Charlene fished commercially in Alaska. After retiring from teaching, Charlene worked at the Shoalwater Bay Clinic in the South Puget Inter-Tribal Planning Agency in Women's Wellness Program. She is passionate and committed to ensuring the health of our future generations.

"I am a natural born worrier. I worry about the health of all of our Tribal members. I am concerned about the health of our plants, fish, animals, air, water, and earth because of contaminants which are making these things less healthy. I know the health of our people will affect the history and health of our Tribes as a whole. I am a worrier, but I also do whatever I can do as an Elder to support changes that will improve the health of all of our Tribes and the environment around us. Creator has given our Tribe wonderful, healthy babies after years of no babies; I want these children to grow up to be happy, healthy members of our Tribe who will do great things that I cannot even imagine."