



WA Tribal Opioid and Fentanyl Taskforce

Minutes

American Indian Health Commission
1/28/2025 9:00 AMPST

Attendance

Present:

Members: Aliza Brown (remote), Jennifer LaPointe (remote), James Salazar (remote), Ofi Brown (remote), Dylan Gonzales (remote), Andrew Guillen (remote), Summer Hammons (remote), Maureen Kinley (remote), Steve Kutz (remote), Jill Malone (remote), Lorinda Robideau (remote), Aaron Soto (remote), Sarah Sullivan (remote), Jolene Winger (remote)

Guests: Chelsea Sayles/Quileute Tribal Attorney (remote), JeannieL160 (remote), William Lucero (remote), Megan Tripp (remote)

AIHC: Kathryn Akeah (remote), Marci Halverson (remote), Heather Holzer (remote), Terra Horton (remote), Laura Kluever (remote), Vicki Lowe (remote), Ashley Lowe-Thaens (remote), Maria Ness (remote), Jen Olson (remote), Pam Priest (remote), Lisa Rey Thomas (remote), Faith Turk (remote)

City: Mayor Chris Roberts (remote)

COM: Michelle Gladstone-Wade (remote)

DCYF: Shannel Squally-Janzen (remote)

DOH: Amber Arndt (remote), Mary Beth Brown (remote), Kristin Peterson (remote), Kathy Pierre (remote)

DSHS: Tim Collins (remote), Brenda Francis-Thomas (remote), Heather Hoyle (remote), Amber Leaders (remote), Leah Muasau (remote), Sher Stecher (remote)

GOIA: Tim Reynon (remote)

HCA: Tina Anderson (remote), Nakia DeMiero (remote), Charissa Fotinos (remote), Lucilla Mendoza (remote), Kris Shera (remote), Christine Winn (remote)

OIC: Larry Robinette (remote)

OSPI: Rebecca Purser (remote)

State Representative: Debra Lekanoff (remote)

WAHBE: Charlene Abrahamson (remote)

WSP: Emily Main (remote), Shane Nelson (remote)

Attendance

Absent:

Members: Terra Horton (she/her) - Finance Administrator, Kathryn Akeah - Consultant, Emily Arnesen, January Austin, Allison Ball, Mrs. Ofi Brown - NWITC Director, Michael Christensen, Caytee Cline - Director of Tribal Wellness Ctr, Kim Coombs, Karyn Cross, Nakia DeMiero, Jessica

Dolge, Mrs. Dylan Dressler - Clinic Director, Britni Duncan, Melissa Ellis, Heather Erb - Employee, Kara Frizzell, Zepporah Fuller, Cindy Gamble - Consultant, Emily Gardner, Dylan Gonzales, Andrew Guillen, Marci Halverson, Summer Hammons, Liz Henry, Lucy Hill, Brian Holden, Heather Holzer - Public Relations and Communications, Lona Johnson, Mrs. Maureen Kinley - Tribal Council, Ryan Kippes, Laura Kluever, Steve Kutz, Denese LaClair, Linda Lauch, Vicki Lowe - Executive Director, Ashley Lowe-Thaens - Legislative Administrator, Jill Malone, Marsha Matte, Jessica McKee, Matthew McKnight, Lucilla Mendoza, Maria Ness - Consultant, Jen Olson - Consultant, Jeremy Pangelinan, Nicola Patina, Shad St Paul, Pam Priest - Executive Support, Mythili Ramachandran, Lorinda Robideau, Jovan Salazar, Katherine Saluskin, Marilyn Scott, Andrew Shogren, Stephanie Sijohn, Tia Skerbeck, Aaron Soto, Wendy Stevens - Consultant, Jolene Sullivan, Sarah Sullivan, Mary Szafranski, Andrea Thomas, Lisa Rey Thomas - Consultant, Faith Turk - Employee, Kelly Waibel, Dana Ward, JanMarie Ward - Consultant, Michael Watkins, Lisa Wells, Shyra White, Jolene Winger

I. Welcome

James Salazar, Quileute Tribe

II. Taskforce Business

A. Roll Call/Establish Quorum

Quorum established.

B. Approve Today's Agenda

 [Tribal Opioid Fentanyl Response Taskforce Agenda 1.28.24.pdf](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve with changes to move Legislative updates from Rep Lekanoff and Update from Tribal Warrants Workgroup to beginning of agenda.

Motion carries.

C. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

 [11.26.24 WA Tribal Opioid and Fentanyl Taskforce Minutes.pdf](#)

Motion:

Motion to approve with no changes.

Motion carries.

III. Discussion

A. Legislative Updates HB 1583, Non-Native Medicaid reimbursement for SUD Payments

Presenter: Rep Lekanoff, Vicki Lowe

Rep Lekanoff gave an update on:

- **Non-Native Reimbursements for SUD Payments** - The purpose of the proviso is to direct HCA and the State of Washington to fully fund the Tribal facilities that are providing SUD services. The services have not been fully funded for non-natives since 1998 and is being supported by the Tribes out of their own pockets. The Tribe only receives the Federal match of the encounter for non-Natives. The State has taken the position that they can't afford to pay the non-Native share. Vicki share on-screen the HCA Recommendation Summary for 2025-27. Steve added that early on, the State forced Tribes to send them the match in a check that they then refunded to them in the total amount. SO Tribes were subsidizing the responsibility they had under CMS. Now CMS has instructed them to fix the issue. Vicki is putting together the history on this issue and will share it out so the State can be informed decision makers. Rep. Lekanoff asked for assistance from Amber Leaders and Kristin Peterson to ensure the State and the Tribes are on the same page re how we got here. The numbers in the proviso may be changing to get in line with HCA, DOH and OFM. This is the first step in a long process.
- **HB 1583 Traditional Indian Medicine** - This bill is running parallel with the Waiver request going to the federal government to Include Traditional Indian Medicine. The bill is running to be able to define in state statute and then also direct the waiver process to begin with HCA. She wants to be clear that the Tribal Organizations are included in this. Vicki added that 4 state have received an approval letter from CMS so to not reinvent the wheel, we are using the definition of Traditional Indian Medicines that are in the CME approval letter for Arizona, New Mexico, California, Oregon and Utah which is very close to receiving their approval.

Comments:

Charissa Fotinos is happy to work together on this issue.

Andrew Guillen from Seattle Indian health Board asked that "Urban Indian Organizations" be in the language vs "tribal organizations". Re. Lekanoff stated that "Tribal organizations" is the language being used in the CME approval letters and prefers to not take an amendment and does not want to put them at risk with the current administration.

Steve Kutz added that we are asking the State to follow the CME guidance for all and not do something different. So if the Federal government comes back and fixes the encounter rate for the Urbans, then they should automatically be taken care of in this fix.

B. Update from Tribal Warrants Workgroup

Presenter: Chelsea Sayles, Quileute Tribe

Chelsea provided a high level look at the Tribal Warrants Act. The main purpose of the Tribal Warrants Act Bill 6146 is to expand cross-jurisdictional cooperation so that fugitives from Tribal courts cannot evade justice by remaining off reservation in Washington's counties and cities while ensuring defendants receive the fullest due process protections. This has been a major issue across the US. and for the large number of WA Tribal reservations. Tribal warrants have not been recognized by the State although Tribes recognize State warrants. The passage of this bill is the first of its kind in the Nation. Tribes will be either certified or non-certified, both being recognized but added requirements for the non-certified Tribal court extraditing individuals. The workgroup will be working on some draft forms, and trainings to ensure seamless implementation.

There are a few issues that now need to be addressed in a trailer bill and they will be working with Rep Lekanoff to get it through this legislative session.

The Tribal Warrants Act is regarding adults and not juvenile warrants. That a whole other issue. Once we get this implemented and working well, we will move on to looking at addressing the juvenile warrants.

Comments:

Rep. Lekanoff feels it would great to be able to tie the connection of the Tribal Warrants to the legislative actions re Opioids and the sovereignty of the State and of the Tribes working together on information sharing, data access, and data sharing on services provided. Lessons learned might fall into the same conversations around jurisdiction on legal obligations, and on sharing of documents. She suggest a meeting between Councilman Salazar and Tim Reynon with GOIA. They both agreed.

C. Change in Taskforce Membership - new administration

Introductions were made from new members.

1. GOIA - Tim Reynon

He is in learning mode now and welcomes meetings with anyone willing to have a conversation.

2. Governor's Office - Caitlin Safford, Health Policy

Caitlin joined late in the meeting and introduced herself.

3. DSHS - Amber Leaders, Special Assistant to Secretary

She is excited to continue the work and participate on behalf of DSHS.

D. Summit - May 20-22 at Cowlitz

Presenter: Vicki Lowe, AIHC

1. Save the Date has been sent out. Governor Ferguson to attend on May 22nd.

As soon as contracts are signed within the next couple days, a registration link will be sent out for attending the Summit and a separate one for lodging. The hotel rates will be equal to the current per diem rate.

2. Agenda Update

Based on last years agenda flow:

Day 1 -Lunch is planned for noon with the Cowlitz tribe opening the Summit at 1:00, followed by a Review and Update on Priorities, Lived Experience panel, cleansing ceremony.

Day 2 - Breakout sessions, Culture Night

Day 3 - Task Force meeting, Report Out from the Break Out Sessions, Roundtable with Governor Ferguson

Please let Vicki know of any presentations re programs or services the Tribes would like to share. vicki.lowe@aihc-wa.com. She will a finalized agenda ready for this group at February meeting.

Comments:

The agenda flowed well last year.

Jennifer feels it is important to show progress on the work from year to year. An action-item document on what we have accomplished and what we need to do moving forward posted online is helpful.

Tin Reynon shared that Gov Ferguson has expressed a strong interest in dialogue so good to plan an opportunity for meaningful back and forth.

E. Legislative Reports

Presenters: Vicki Lowe, AIHC; Lucilla Mendoza, HCA

1. Report due June 2025 - focus on legislative priorities

AIHC will be working the report due in June and will bring the draft to this group at the February meeting. It will through an approval process by the HCA so may require an ask of this group for time outside this meeting to really review and give feedback on. The report will be focused on what comes out of the Summit needing legislation that we can can in 2026.

The goals for this session are Traditional Indian Medicine, getting the SUD payments for non-natives fixed and extending the Task Force for another year at no cost.

IV. WA Tribal Opioid and Fentanyl Response Resource Guide

Presenter: Vicki Lowe

We started working on this, focused on the Continuum of Care as that is where we have built most of our resources. The goal was to bring together all the resources developed through the different work groups for the Tribes and Urban programs. Heather described how the online, living resource guide might look.

V. Workgroup Updates

A. Community Response

Steve Kutz reported the group has not been able to meet yet due to meeting conflicts. The group will meet very 2 weeks with plans to invite in the Tribal BH and Opioid treatment providers to one of the meetings each month.

B. Continuum of Care

This group meets the second Tuesday of the month from 3:00 - 5:00 under the AIAN Opioid Response Workgroup. Their focus are the resources through HCA and DOH.

C. Family and Community Services

This group is working under a meeting created by Tim Collins/DSHS to work on public awareness focusing on public health messaging for youth around the opioid response, prevention and treatment. It expanded to included suicide prevention and resources like the Native and Strong Lifeline. The group meets monthly on the 4th Wednesday of every month. The invite comes from Tim. Tim added they working to align everything with UTL, SSC and GIHAC. Opioid are a big driver, but they also look at homelessness, poverty and even Tribal general welfare and are all woven together.

Rebecca Purser added there are quite a few different pieces of work within OSPI. One completed task was legislation for policy and guidance around students being able to self-carry Naloxone on school premises. The other piece of work is the Tribal Schools Opioid Prevention Pilot.

Comments:

Charlene Abrahamson commented on the importance of the debrief following a crisis where Naloxone is administered. Rebecca agreed and it will be a focus. JanMarie has worked with Tribes and the tribal community to develop the Pulling Together for Wellness framework that is a youth oriented model.

D. Housing and Wrap Around Services

The group has met to discuss housing but is still working to connect with Councilwoman Tonasket.

Michelle Gladstone-Wade shared that the Inslee budget did include the Commerce request to create a Tribal set aside in the Housing Trust Fund. They were written in at \$25M and she would like to a high demand for the money so we can continually ask for more as we go forward. She is closely watching an ask for a FTE in their Housing Division that would be dedicated 100% to Tribal housing issues and Tribal housing work. This FE would be vital in this subcommittee. Vicki responded that during their Leg Day, they met with over 50 legislators and brought up the set aside and got a positive response.

E. Public Safety and the Justice System

Councilman Salazar reported that there was a lot of duplication of effort within this project and the Tribal Warrant Workgroup. He purportedly delayed to see what the outcome was for the TWW. We want to promote consistency with what the Tribes are presenting to the State and vice versa. Out of the 13 bullet points, 10 were duplicated. So they now have 3 line items and will received more from the Summit. The group will meet in February on the 10th to go over the 3 line items and bring together the work from the Tribal Warrants Workgroup.

VI. Tribal Youth Councils - Youth Summit Fall 2025

Presenter: JanMarie Ward, AIHC

JanMarie shared that they are working on the planning for a youth prevention and leadership summit that will take place in October. There are a number of different programs working together to support this. Right now they are recruiting youth to participate on the planning committee.

VII. Program Updates

There is confusion and chaos around the Federal government freezing funds. Tribes are drawing down as many Federal funds as they can before 2:00 today.

Jill Malone from Stillaguamish shared that all DEI related programs, IHS and all tribal sovereignty related programs are on the list to freeze. Chelsea Sayles stated that the Tribal attorneys are on top of this and lawsuits are being filed. It does not impact Opioid funds, Medicaid and probably not the FPHS funds although Dr Fotinos shared that they are learning more by the hour and it looks like the whole Medicaid system got turned off by mistake. Jill added it may be a period of time before this all gets sorted out so salaries in the mean time will affected for those funded by grants not just for Tribes, but universities, and research.

Lummi's also drawing down their funds and actually started back in December. Lobbyists are advising them to track notices of funding being pulled and to track the impact to their nation that the funding will have if we don't receive it.

A. Tribal/Urban Opioid Abatement Settlement Dollars - All

Quileute - With their Abatement Settlement Dollars, they are looking to expand their transitional housing. From our lived experience, housing is a very large reason why people are relapsing due to being surrounded by unsafe, unclean environments.

Tulalip - They are breaking up the money for 2 different programs which is hard. Summer shared they are using the money to support people in treatment and recovery by embedding a

social worker with the Tulalip health systems but to work closely with the Tribal Police as well. Then two, they are investing money towards the prevention program, most likely the Icelandic Model becoming the WA State prevention model.

VIII. Meeting Cadence through June 2025

January 28th, 2025
February 25, 2025
March 25, 2025
April 22, 2025
May 20-22, 2025 (Summit)
June 24, 2025

IX. Adjournment

Motion:

Motion to Close the Meeting.

Motion Carries.