



AIAN Opioid Response Workgroup (ORW)

Minutes

American Indian Health Commission
6/10/2025 3:00 PMPDT

@ Virtual

Attendance

Present:

Members: Lucy Hill (remote), Steve Kutz (remote), Stephanie Sijohn (remote), Aliza Mail-Brown (remote), Shayla (remote), WilliamL (remote)

AIHC: Vicki Lowe (remote), Lisa Rey Thomas (remote), Pam Priest (remote), Faith Turk (remote), Heather Holzer (remote), Cindy Gamble (remote), JanMarie Ward (remote), Laura Kluever (remote), Terra Horton (she/her) (remote), Kathryn Akeah (remote), Jen Olson (remote)

DH: Megan Mills (remote)

DOC: Colleen Cawston (remote)

DOH: Kathy Pierre (remote), Jill Edgin (remote), Emalie Huriaux (remote), Amber Arndt (remote)

DSHS: Sher Stecher (remote)

HCA: Nakia DeMiero (remote), Kris Shera (remote), Melissa Thoemke (remote), Anne Paulsen (remote)

Kauffman and Assoc Inc: Danica Brown (remote)

State Representative: Debra Lekanoff (remote)

WAHBE: Charlene Abrahamson (remote)

I. Welcome/Introductions

Presenters: Vicki Lowe, Lisa Rey Thomas

II. Washington Tribal Opioid Fentanyl Summit Review

Presenters: Vicki Lowe, Lisa Rey Thomas

The Summit was attended by over 300 people with 25 of the 29 Federally recognized Tribes and both Urban Indian Health Organizations represented, 13 State agencies, 3 Federal agencies, 3 Leg staff, 2 Legislators and 5 Tribal organizations.

Vicki reviewed the 2025 Summit Priorities: Overall Requests found in the slide deck below, WA Tribal Opioid 2025 Summit Outcomes starting on page 11.

Questions/Comments:

Steve Kutz commented that we learn so much from the lived/living experience panelists. It was clear that most started using substances early in life. Mental health services are as important as SUD treatment. Assessing for co-occurring disorder is so important. He is advocating for a broader utilization of all the support services and have someone skilled in trauma informed care in the mix.

Steve thinks it would be a good idea to take a look at what should be part of urine drug screening. Emily added...what is the goal of the UA? If you test for drugs, you need to know what your are going to do with a positive.

Nakia shared that **Millennium Health, who does all the UA's, was at The Summit and wants to share their data. It would be good to have them present at a future meeting.**

Colleen Cawston needs to be pointed to who put in the ask for about involving Tribal Behavioral Health prior to release in the Reentry process during the Roundtable. **Vicki will get back to her**. Steve feels the people that need to working with them are the people following them or the entity that is coordinating services. Also, important is what assessments are being with the inmate that is being released?

 [WA Tribal Opioid 2025 Summit Outcomes.pdf](#)

III. Review of Legislative Report Recommendations

Presenter: Vicki Lowe

She then focused on the **Continuum of Care Legislative Report Section**. The next steps are to send the Legislative Report to the co-chairs to review and then out to all of the Task Force members, followed by a vote at the meeting on the 24th to move it forward.

Many thanks were shared to the team at AIHC, staff at Ilani, the Cowlitz Tribe and Rep Lekanoff for their hard work on the Summit.

Questions/Comments -

- Amber Arndt requested an **executive summary be created and distributed. AIHC will work on this.**
- Emalie Hurliaux/DOH shared that her team recently hosted a Harm Reduction Summit. One of the feedback sets was interest in a Tribally-focused Harm Reduction Best Practices Summit. Lisa offered to help in any way.

 [Tribal Opioid Standard Leg Report_DRAFT \(3\) w summit recs.docx](#)

IV. Update from HCA

Presenters: Nakia Demiero, Kris Shera

A. Opioid Abatement Update

Presenter: Nakia DeMiero

- Nakia sent out a Tribal Plan and budget template earlier today to Tribes so you can get started on drafting your plans along with a document titled Exhibit E which is the list of approved uses.
- HCA is currently working on a plan for the Icelandic Model and Prevention campaign
- The 2025 Annual report is due no later than June 30th
- Nakia clarified that there will be negotiations for the new funding agreement for the next biennium. The above requirements is closing out **this** biennium.
- Congrats to Nakia for being hooded tomorrow night at Evergreen State College

[Opioid Abatement Update Slides](#)

B. Settlement Update

Presenter: Kris Shera, HCA State Opioid Administrator

[Settlement Update Slide Deck](#)

- **Peak to Coast Online Summit** - Kris shared information re an online Summit - Peak to Coast Online Summit - <https://region10opioidsummit.org/>. September 4-5, 2025. Registration is open. Will be virtual due to budget constraints.

Steve commented that we should asking Denver for money as Region10 has been dissolved. All of California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska is now in the denver region. Tribes will need to work closely with HCA, Kri will share whatever he hears at the State level. Kris will also update slides and change reference to Region 10.

- **Opioid Settlement Updates -**

- **2025 Opioid Budget Highlights -**

Emalie shared that the Recovery Navigator Program had a 20% funding reduction. It's part of the Blake Bill.

V. Group Updates

No updates.

VI. Closing

VII. Additional Meeting Materials

[Zoom Meeting Chat](#)

[Zoom Meeting Transcription](#)