



AIHC Delegates Meeting -Hybrid Minutes

American Indian Health Commission

6/5/2025 9:00 AMPDT

@ The NATIVE Project, 1803 W Maxwell Ave, Spokane, WA 99201

Attendance

Present:

Members: Caytee Cline (remote), Zepporah Fuller (remote), Summer Hammons (remote), Liz Henry (remote), Lucy Hill (remote), Steve Kutz, Denese LaClair (remote), Linda Lauch, Jill Malone (remote), Cheryl Sanders (remote), Andrew Shogren (remote), Sarah Sullivan (remote), Quintina Bowen (remote), Nicole Gibson (remote), Toni Lodge, Denise Ross (remote), Marilyn Scott (remote), Joleen Sullivan (remote), Lisa Wells (remote), Sheena Williams (remote)

Guests: Beth Bojkov, Ali Desautel (remote), Andy Jospheh, Julie Walker (remote), Lauren Whiteside (remote)

AIHC: Vicki Lowe, Heather Holzer, Terra Horton, Jen Olson, Pam Priest (remote), Lisa Rey Thomas (remote), Faith Turk (remote), Maria Ness (remote), Laura Kluever, Kathryn Akeah (remote), Heather Erb (remote), Cindy Gamble, Marci Halverson (remote), Wendy Stevens (remote), JanMarie Ward

DCYF: Cassie Anderson (remote)

DOH: Candice Wilson (remote), Kathy Pierre (remote), Amber Arndt, Amira Caluya (remote), Mary Beth Brown (remote), Nicole Casanova (remote), Herbie Duber (remote), Michaela Marshall (remote)

DSHS: Tim Collins (remote)

HCA: Aren Sparck (remote), Lucilla Mendoza (remote), Christine Winn (remote), Lena Nachland (remote), Jaron Heller (remote), Raina Peone, Nakia DeMiero (remote), Tina Anderson (remote)

NPAIHB: Hilary Edwards (remote)

OIC: Larry Robinette

WAHBE: Manny Santiago, Charlene Abrahamson

WIC: Sheryl Pickering (remote)

I. Welcome

Presenter: Steve Kutz, AIHC Chair
Opening Blessing - Andy Joseph
Gift Presentation of "Seven Generations" print to Toni Lodge.

II. Establish Quorum

Linda Lauch, AIHC Treasurer.

III. Introductions

IV. Approval of Agenda

Motion:

Approval of today's agenda

Motion carried.

V. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

 [2.5.25 AIHC Delegates Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

Motion:

Approval 2.5.2025 Minutes

Motion carried.

VI. Election of AIHC Treasurer (Presenters: Steve Kutz)

Summer Hammons nominated Sarah Sullivan. Sarah Sullivan accepted the nomination and approved by acclamation.

VII. Approval of Financial Report

Presenter: Terra Horton, AIHC Finance Administrator. terra.horton@aihc-wa.com

AIHC is working on getting a new accountant. Also getting funds from the Inatai Foundation which is a 501(c)(4) philanthropy seeking to transform the balance of power to ensure equity and racial justice across Washington state and beyond that helps with meetings, food, lodging.

 [2025.06 AIHC Finance Report.pdf](#)

Motion:

Approve Financial Report

Motion carried.

VIII. AIHC Executive Committee Updates (Presenters: Steve Kutz, Summer Hammons, Maureen Kinley, Linda Lauch)

WA Tribal Opioid and Fentanyl Summit - Steve thanked the AIHC staff for their hard work to ensure the The Washington Tribal Opioid Fentanyl Summit was a success.

Linda Lauch - Again, thanked AIHC for their hard work on the Summit and the Cowlitz Tribe for hosting. The venue was great!

EPIC - Steve wants to push hard for a solution for the Tribes. Steve suggested that grantors for major nonprofit hospital systems fund EPIC for the Tribes. He had the conversation at ATNI. Steve and Vicki met with Providence who already serves 5-6 Tribes currently. He suggests working with HCA as soon as a Secretary is in place. Toni Lodge shared that they are using OCHIN EPIC and has been a great solution for them. She does have concerns about Providence as they cutting programs/services creating an inadequate network as well as they will own the data. Steve agreed that discussion needs to happen

with HCA re ownership of the data not matter what system we go with. Toni believes the Tribes should do this on their own and use the Medicaid Transformation funds.

Summer Hammons - Shoutout to Vicki Lowe, and AIHC staff for their hard work on the Summit as well as the State partners. It was very meaningful.

IX. State Agency Updates

A. Washington Health Benefits Exchange

Presenter: Manny Santiago, Chief of Equity & Community Partnerships; Charlene Abrahamson, Tribal Liaison

Agenda:

- Finalized Roundtables and Resolution of Consultation - Bronze Plan Restricted View
- Tribal Assister In-Service Days held in April
- Federal Premium Tax Credits ePTC
- Other Updates
- Recruitment Opportunities

Questions/Comments -

Sarah Sullivan wondered if there are other Marketplace provisions in the House bill that WAHBE is concerned about. Charlene responded that there are some Private Insurance concerns and she will follow up with the group. Manny added that there are also concerns re the 21% increase in rates the OIC announced. Sarah requested a one-pager from WAHBE that talks about the top concerns and potential impacts to Tribes.

 [June 2025 AIHC Delegates Mtg WAHBE 06.05.2025.pdf](#)

B. Office of the Insurance Commissioner

Presenter: Larry Robinette, Tribal Liaison

Insurance Rates - Larry explained that OIC increases rates based on a proposal brought to them by producers/providers that basically asks for what they need with justification. This year, 21.2% was the proposed rate increase. OIC has to then review with their experts and actuaries, allowing some room for negotiations and show that it is justifiable. OIC and the producers will come to an agreement sometime mid to late August. He added that other insurance ie house/property will also be going up. He suggested that everyone get quotes for all insurance regularly as it does change, sometimes for the better.

Insurance Provider Guidance - Provides guidance for us to work together on issues. [OIC Complaints](#) or call 805-626-9000.

Upcoming Engagements - Larry will be attending various conferences around Washington.

Questions/Comments -

An issue was raised regarding changes with providers being in-network and out of network and it changing from one visit to the next.

Steve asked where are the rate increases going because it is not getting passed down to the providers. What in the system is driving the increase? Under the Right of Recovery, if you are contracted provider with a plan, do you have to accept their contracted rate even if across town they pay the big healthcare system more? heater replied yes, you are stuck. And that is why Tribes don't contract but that then prohibits you from referring out.

Lisa Wells/Nisqually asked about the letter that came out re protections of Purchased Referred Care. She is running into a lot of provider unwilling to forward PCR billing to them or to discuss a person's PCR billing. They are trying to put a legal document together to address and hopefully create a different relationship. Vicki shared that AIHC has discussed doing their 101 trainings with the WA State Hospital Assoc. Heather added the Hosp Assoc talked about doing a guidance document and would love to connect with Nisqually legal team to include a one-pager

on this issue of not getting bills from providers as well as working with 3rd party collectors. Lisa liked this idea. It was also suggested to get the AG's assistance on this as well. HCA asked to be looped in as well. Charlene shared that Asa from the AG's office will be presenting on Medical Debt at a Tribal Assistors meeting.

Heather Erb shared that another issue that is in common is ... what is the accountability of the hospital for the actions of these bill collectors? Sarah Sullivan suggested getting a one-pager specifically out to Tribes that can be used a template to circulate to all their Tribal PCR members. Lisa would like to see hospitals be pushed to educate their systems. HCA acknowledged that it is a confusing issue when there is a biller of last resort AFTER Medicaid. Their Tribal Liaisons are really good at stepping in when you run into these barriers.

C. Health Care Authority

Presenter: Aren Sparck, Administrator Office of Tribal Affairs; Lena Nachland; Lucilla Mendoza
Agenda:

- **HCA Director (Aren)** - Announcement for new director could be as early as July 1st and a start date of August. Per the RCW's, HCA is ensuring power is at the senior leadership level which they are currently out of compliance with OTP. Aren is happy with the advocacy from the Tribes to make sure the State is doing this as well as working closely with GOIA.
- **State and Federal Budgets (Aren)** - HCA is still working on these but don't have clear guidance from OFM or the Gov's Office on what's going to happen when we start looking at cuts from the state level. As soon as they know what the impacts are, they will disseminate the info to all interested parties. A lot of potential cuts would happen on the programmatic side. Here is the link Vicki sent to Aren: [Coalition Action Center – Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty](#). These are fairly general.
- **Decision Package Concept Papers: CHAP (Community Health Aide Practitioner), TIM (Traditional Indian Medicine), PCCMe (Primary Care COordination Management Entity), Co-occurring E&T Cost-based rate (Aren)** - HCA has to go through this every year for spending authorizations with the state government. All 4 concept papers were submitted on time but doesn't mean they are going to go soon. They will hear back next week if there's going to be extra analysis. These do become public once at OFM. These DP's are considered maintenance level increases. HCA will reach out to Tribes when Tribal advocacy is needed.
- **AIR WAC (Aren)** - A Consultation was recently held and the notes will be coming out soon. A workgroup (WA Administrative Code Work Group) will be created to create the WAC, and will end up in a consultation as well, so new round tables as well.
- **Native Hub at GIHAC (Aren)** - Next Wednesday is GIHAC in the morning. There will be a vote on the Native Hub to create an entity to start taking money and to create the foundation for infrastructure and capacity to create the Native Hub. This work began a 13 years ago and we are so close today!! Vicki reminded the group that a survey was sent to update their GIHAC representative so that every Tribe and Urban is represented. It does default to the AIHC Delegate if the Tribe does not name someone.
- **HCMACS (Health Care Management and Coordination System)** (Lena Nachland) - See slides.
- **TIM** (Lena) - See slides.
- **SNA (Sovereign Nations Agreement) Consultation Close Out and Next Steps (Lucy)** - see Slides
- **SUPTRS Block Grant Application Consultation** (Lucy) - See Slides.
- **Listening Session Proposal** (Lucy) - Lucy asked for Tribal input on having a Listening Session during the Tribal Centric BH Advisory Board meeting on the 18th. She needs to get a DTLL out. The group agreed the 18th works. The LS would be about the BH Network Adequacy Standard for managed care organizations.

Share the HCA Slides. (may need to create)

Questions/Comments -

Toni asked if the 2 Urban clinics were included in the DP's for TIM. Aren responded yes. Toni asked for the details so that she can talk with her Representatives regarding. Aren assured the group there will be multiple Roundtables and Consultation to help design this.

Regarding the State and Federal budget, Sarah Sullivan is looking at 2 pieces - eligibility/enrollment and financing. She would like to have a better idea of what is being talked about re provider taxes and the State medicaid Directive payments as well as FMAP and the impacts of potential losses. It would influence their advocacy in DC. DSHS is working on a brief for SNAF. Is HCA working on something similar? Here are a couple HCA links with general analysis: KFF tracker a lot of states have been using for analysis [Tracking the Medicaid Provisions in the 2025 Reconciliation Bill | KFF](#) and HCA's initial analysis on Medicaid cuts in the Reconciliation Bill - [Medicaid in Washington State](#).. Aren added that HCA is waiting to give official analysis once they know what the cuts are.

Steve stated that Tribes can not wait until 2027 for HCMACS.

Marilyn Scott asked if HCA has looked at the State of Arizona and Puyallup and what they did as examples. Lena responded that they are working on MANAT because they have that Federal scope and are able to get meetings with our counterparts at the state level. They have not gone to the facility level yet but that is the next step to see how its being implemented.

Steve asked Lucy how many times does HCA connect with MCO's on their network adequacy? Lucy will need ask and get back to the group.

D. Department of Health

Presenter: Candice Wilson, Executive Director, OTPHR; Amber Arndt, Tribal Policy Director, OTPHR

[DOH Sliddeck](#)

Agenda:

- DOH Secretary of Health Update
- DTLL's & Legislative Process
- DOH Consultation & Collaboration Updates
- Opioid Abatement Funds to expand Telehealth for Buprenorphine statewide
- Tribal related meetings in reference to DOH MTM letter

Kathy Pierre shared these links in the chat -

- <https://waportal.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/OTC%20Contraception%20Community%20Chat-June-One%20Pager.pdf>
- <https://waportal.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/OTC%20Contraception%20Community%20Chat-June-Flyer.pdf>

Amira shared these links in the chat -

- [NSLL Stats - Broad Metrics 5.25.pptx](#)
- <https://nativeandstrong.org/partner-toolkit/>
- Join our NEW Data@Health Collaborative! We need 2-3 more Tribal representatives. View the charter and Submit your interest [here](#). [Data@Collaborative DTLL](#)

Questions/Comments:

Regarding telehealth for buprenorphine, how many folks really get engaged with taking care of their core issues? Olivia responded that 100% of those already with a BUP prescription go back to their provider and continue on. For those 60% of patients that are looking for new linkage to care, it's about 80%.

Regarding Vaccine Schedules, Steve stated this was discussed at the State Board of Health and the recommendations coming out of the CDC are from the non-vaxxer perspective. What are

the State's recommendations going to be? The issue is the insurance companies won't pay for it if not recommended. It may be necessary for a multi-state coalition to form that is interested in true PH vs what is coming out of this Administration. Amber responded that because of the many changes coming from the Federal level, they are holding weekly meetings between DOH, the State Health Officer and with the LHJ's to ensure we are talking through this and other critical updates.

X. Lunch Break

Tour of the NATIVE Project Wellness Village.

XI. Vaccine Update and Measles Support Materials (Presenters: Wendy Stevens, Heather Holzer)

 [AIHCTribalImmz.6.5.2025.Delegates.pptx](#)

XII. Introduction to the Bree Collaborative

Presenters: Beth Bojkov, MPH, RN, Director of Research and Best Practice

"Washington State, along with the rest of the country, is working to identify and promote strategies that improve patient health outcomes, health care service quality, and the affordability of health care.

Achieving these goals requires collaboration between the many different stakeholders in health care.

We fill this need by providing a setting in which collaboration can be successful."

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Questions/Comments -

Toni raised her concern that this was done with Tribal input. She also wonders how much weight these determinations carry with the HCA.

Steve commented that the model only works if you can drive out down in the organizations that ought to implement it. It has got to be team effort to take the guidelines into the work and implement into the best practices.

It was suggested the presentation be streamlined more for Tribes.

 [Bree-AIHC-0605.pdf](#)

XIII. Update on Public Health Priorities (Presenters: JanMarie Ward, Cindy Gamble)

[MIH Updates Slide Deck](#)

- Tribal PRAMS
- Maternal Infant Child Adolescent Health
- Maternal Mortality Review

Questions/Comments:

Steve Kutz commented that it is important to know if the AIAN data that was done in the previous PRAMS survey was collected in enough numbers and in enough places that it actually demonstrates what the real data says. It will be interesting to compare with this one. The issue is the data being replicated, not how many people participate.

XIV. 2026 Legislative Priorities

WA Tribal Opioid/Fentanyl Summit Legislative Priorities

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

XV. Open Delegate Discussion

There was a question about the LMS system that Kathryn Akeah has been working. She reported she is now on the final module GOV to GOV. If any one would like to be a Beta tester, let her know. She is hoping to get it out as a "soft open" by the summer.

Vicki asked the group about when we should meet next as we got a little off schedule. Steve thought it would be difficult to get a quorum over the summer so September would be best. Then in December. Candice shared her concern that DOH has been cut out of meetings and unable to collaborate with Tribes. See DOH slides 33 - 40 for all the meetings she identified. They want to be a good partner. Sarah Sullivan responded that Candice brings up a good point and wants to think about a solution. It is a lot on top of all the Federal stuff.

XVI. Adjournment

XVII. Executive Session

(if needed)