



AIHC Delegates Meeting Minutes

09/03/2025 9:00 AM PDT to 3:30 PM PDT

American Indian Health Commission

Hosted by Lummi

Attendance:

(* Attending In-Person)

Amber Arndt, DOH OTPHR
Andrea Thomas, Muckleshoot
Andrew Shogren, Jamestown S'Klallam
*Anthony Hillaire, Lummi
*Aren Sparck HCA OTA
Barbara Juarez
Cassie Anderson, DCYF
Caytee Cline, Chehalis
*Charlene Abrahamson, WAHBE
Cheryl Sanders, Lummi Nation
Christine Winn, Quinault Citizen, HCA OTA Deputy
Cindy Gamble, AIHC
Dana Ward, Jamestown Tribe
Denise.Ross, Quinault Nation
Lois Scott, DOH/OTPHR
*Candice Wilson Quatz'tenaut DOH
*Kathry Pierre, DOH
Faith Turk, AIHC
Gary
Heather Erb, AIHC
Heather Holzer# AIHC
Heather Hoyle, DSHS OIP
*Hilary Edwards | NPAIHB
J. Manny Santiago, WAHBE
Jaron Heller - HCA/OTA
Jen Olson, AIHC
*Jennifer LaPointe, Swinomish
Jessica McKee, AIHC
Jill Edgin, DOH OTPHR (she/her)
Jill Malone, Suquamish

Joe Santos (HCA-OTA)
Katherine_Saluskin, Yakama
kathryn akeah, AIHC
Kay Culbertson, Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Kim Coombs-Chehalis Tribe
Larry Robinette, OIC
Laura Kluever - AIHC
*Lena Nachand, Washington Medicaid
LINDA LAUCH, AICC
*Lisa Rey Thomas, AIHC
Lisa Wells, Nisqually
Liz Henry, Kalispel Tribe
Lorinda Robideau, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Lucilla Mendoza, HCA-OTA
Lucy Hill, NWITC, Squaxin Island Tribe
*Marcella Halvorsen, AIHC
Maria Ness, AIHC
Marilyn Scott, Upper Skagit Tribe
*Maureen Kinley - Lummi
Michaela Marshall, DOH-OTPHR
Mike Tisdale N.W.I.T.C. Squaxin Island
Nakia DeMiero, HCA Office of Tribal Affairs
Nicole Gibson Skokomish Wellness Center
Quintina Bowen - Health Director, Samish
Racel Armas, Squaxin
Rosalinda Fivekiller-Turk, DOH
Ryan Moran, HCA
*Sarah Sullivan, Swinomish | didgwalic
Sheena Williams, Lummi Nation
*Steve Kutz, Suquamish
*Summer Hammons, Tulalip Tribes
Terra Horton (she/her) AIHC
Tim Collins, DSHS
Toni Lodge, NATIVE Project, Spokane
Veronica Smith, NPAIHB
*Vicki Lowe, AIHC
Wendy Stevens. AIHC

I. Welcome/Opening Blessing - 9:00 AM PDT

Presented By Summer Hammons, Maureen Kinley

- The meeting began with a blessing, emphasizing gratitude and the intention for unity among participants.
- The meeting begins with introductions by the vice chair, who welcomes all attendees and acknowledges the presence of those online.

- The vice chair discusses the significant challenges in addressing health disparities in Indian Country within Washington State, highlighting the complexity and burden of this responsibility.
- Emphasis is placed on the need for mutual support in overcoming historical cycles of abuse and creating a better future for the next generations.
- Expressions of gratitude are extended to all attendees for their leadership and contributions, with specific mentions of Councilmember Maureen Kinley's role in organizing the meeting.
- A personal anecdote from the vice chair is shared, reflecting on the influence of family members in leadership roles and their contribution to the community.
- The scheduling note that Steve will join the meeting shortly is made, indicating an upcoming transition in the meeting agenda.

II. AIHC Business

A. Establish Quorum - 9:10 AM PDT

Presented By Maureen Kinley

Link to [Roll Call](#)

- A reminder was given that meeting information can be found on Onboard, along with a link to the agenda available from a newsletter dated August 3rd.
- The establishment of a quorum was confirmed after the roll call.

B. Approve [June 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#) - 9:15 AM PDT

Presented By Summer Hammons

- Director Moran gave introductory remarks, sharing his background and his new role, expressing his gratitude and eagerness to work with the team.
- There was a review of the previous meeting's minutes, which included key governance activities such as the election of the treasurer, executive committee updates, and various state agency updates.
- Motion - A motion was made by Lummi to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
- Second - The motion to approve the minutes was seconded by ? .
- Decision - The motion to approve the minutes was passed with votes in favor and no abstentions recorded.

C. Approve Today's Agenda - 9:20 AM PDT

Presented By Summer Hammons

- The agenda for today's meeting includes updates on GHAC, annual meeting, and state agencies including the Department of Health and HCA. Additional presentations include one from Gary Leva about HRSA FQHC funding at 1 o'clock and discussions on legislative priorities and impacts to Washington State Tribes. Updates from the executive committee and a potential executive session are also on the agenda.
- Motion - A motion was requested to approve the agenda by Lummi.

- Second - The agenda motion was seconded by a representative from the Jamestown Tribe.
- Decision - The agenda was approved with no objections.

D. Upcoming GIHAC and Annual Meeting - 9:25 AM PDT

Presented By Heather Holzer/AIHC

Link to [Annual Showcase Slide Deck](#)

- The upcoming GHAC and annual meeting will take place on the second and third days of December at Jamestown College.
- Heather Holzer introduced a proposal to add an Annual Showcase to the event schedule, intended to serve as a resource fair with tables for staff, consultants, and state agencies.
- The Annual Showcase aims to highlight the accomplishments of the year and allow more in-depth discussions prior to the next day's delegate meeting, which will focus on planning for 2026.
- There is a suggestion to ensure that the Onboard platform is utilized for updates and meeting resources, with the possibility of enforcing license redistribution if individuals do not use it.
- Attendees can RSVP to meetings via Onboard, stating their mode of attendance, which assists in meeting planning.
- **Action Item** - Pam Priest is requested to send out the link to the Onboard platform to all delegates to ensure all necessary parties have access.
- **Action Item** - Charlene Abrahamson needs a license for the Onboard platform, and arrangements are made to get her one.

E. Centennial Accord Preparation

- A pre-meeting for the Centennial Accord is planned for 8:30 AM on the 21st.
- There is a discussion about tribal leaders attending the Centennial Accord, highlighting concerns about limited participation and the need for a more collaborative approach.
- A suggestion is made to have an additional preparatory meeting specifically for the tribal leaders prior to the main pre-meeting.
- The main events of the Centennial Accord include an all-virtual gathering on the 20th, a pre-meeting on the 21st, and the main event on the 22nd.
- A decision is made to set a preparatory meeting on October 16th at 2 PM following ATNI.
- **Action Item** - Vicki Lowe requests a calendar notice for the coordination of the preparatory meetings.
- **Action Item** - Patrick DePoe to be included in future communications for tribal discussions liaising with the governor's office.
- There's an expressed desire for greater involvement in the Association of Washington Tribes meetings to provide health updates.

III. State Agency Updates

A. Department of Health - 9:30 AM PDT

Presented By Candice Wilson, Amber Arndt

Link to [DOH Slide Deck](#)

Link to [2026 Budget One Pager](#)

Link to [COVID-19 Vaccine Statement for Tribal Partners](#)

- The Department of Health (DOH) is preparing to submit proposed legislation and budgets to the Governor's office, with updates expected in December.
- DOH is proposing two pieces of legislation: one for opioid treatment program accreditation and another for bringing authority over vaccine recommendations to the state.
- Tribes are exempt from the new fees proposed in the decision packages due to budget shortfalls except for specific funding adjustments.
- DOH provided insights on adjustments in vaccine recommendations due to federal changes, including potential implications for state insurance coverage.
- The West Coast Health Alliance with Washington, Oregon, and California aims to uphold scientific integrity in public health matters.
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAGOV/bulletins/3f0d1a3> **Washington, California and Oregon to launch new West Coast Health Alliance to uphold scientific integrity in public health as Trump destroys CDC's credibility**
- Budget impacts on the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program are forecasted, with reductions in staff and resources affecting service delivery.
- Two listening sessions are planned for September 22nd and 24th to discuss and address WIC program impacts with tribal leaders.
- Action is needed to mitigate reductions in administrative support for WIC programs, focusing on leveraging other Medicaid programs.
- The DOH is preparing environmental justice grants and continuing work on the environmental health disparities map.
- Preparations for the 2026 FIFA World Cup include assessing public health impacts near reservations.

B. Health Care Authority - 10:30 AM PDT

Presenters: Ryan Moran, Aren Sparck, Christine Winn, Lena Nachland, Lucilla Mendoza

Link to [HCA Slide Deck](#)

- A meeting took place to discuss the all-inclusive rate (AIR) process, where it was addressed that there is significant concern among tribes about changes and clarity in the process. A Washington Administrative Code (WAC) draft was shared as a potential way to address these issues.
- There is a focus on ensuring that protections for services that are currently AIR eligible remain in place amidst budget concerns.
- Listening sessions and Consultations are planned to address AIR and related issues.

- Tribal leaders expressed concern about the impact of budget cuts on Tribal healthcare and insisted that the state acknowledges Tribal contributions to state savings.
- The need for better communication and involvement of Tribes in the development of new policies and codes (WACs) was emphasized.
- Tribes requested more inclusive participation and communication in ongoing processes, emphasizing that current communication channels are not effective.
- There was a call for improved governance structure and engagement, especially concerning federal and statewide budget impacts on Tribal health care.
- A call for tribal leaders to provide clarity on representation for healthcare meetings, ensuring proper inclusion in decision-making.
- There is ongoing development of a Native Hub concept as a Tribal Managed Care Entity.
- A re-entry initiative launched to support Native individuals transitioning from incarceration, attempting to improve care coordination.
- The state confirmed major budget cuts affecting healthcare positions and services, indicating significant layoffs and contract terminations.
- An announcement was made regarding delays in Sovereign Nation Agreements, urging tribes to complete necessary negotiations and sign agreements to receive funding.
- Discussion on how the state can better support tribal healthcare funding within given budget constraints took place.

C. Washington Health Benefits Exchange - 11:30 AM PDT

Presenters: Manny Santiago, Charlene Abrahamson

Link to [WAHBE Slide Deck](#)

- An update was provided on the Washington Health Benefit Exchange's acknowledgment of operating on Indigenous land, emphasizing equity and anti-racism as core components of their mission.
- The newly drafted land acknowledgement was shared, which had been discussed in the Tribal Advisory Workgroup and was shared in the most recent board meeting.
- The meeting introduced updates on legislative and policy changes, including HR1 and AIAN considerations, outlining work requirements and other healthcare engagement requirements.
- There was a discussion on the impact of Medicaid redetermination occurring every 6 months, which could significantly affect American Indian/Alaska Native communities.
- A timeline of marketplace changes was presented, highlighting potential impacts like the elimination of certain subsidies and shortening of enrollment periods.
- Concerns were raised over the cancellation of advanced premium tax credits, highlighting efforts by the agency's CEO and legislative affairs director to engage with congressional delegations to prevent expiration.
- Action Item - Action was suggested for sharing impact details of the expiration of EPTC with communities, highlighting the importance of advocacy among residents for congressional support.

- An emergency rule, referred to as silver loading, was enacted to preserve customer affordability, potentially increasing available premium tax credits by up to \$110 million annually.
- **Action Item** - A commitment was made to provide clearer communication to tribal members about available plans and support them in navigating these plans to find the best financial options.
- **Action Item** - It's planned to produce and distribute a simplified presentation and tool for tribal councils to better understand and consider sponsorship opportunities.
- **Action Item** - It was suggested to ensure that a resolution is in place outlining who is eligible for healthcare sponsorship, including scenarios and categories like descendants or non-tribal spouses.

D. Office of the Insurance Commissioner - 11:45 AM PDT

Presenter: Larry Robinette, Tribal Liaison

IV. Lunch - 12:00 PM PDT

- A blessing was given for the meal, expressing gratitude for the individuals who prepared the food, and emphasizing a sense of community and strength gained through collective efforts.

V. Understanding HRSA FQHC Funding - 12:55 PM PDT

Presenter: Gary Leva, Gary Consulting

Link to [Community Health Centers Slide Deck](#)

- Gary discussed the potential opportunities and challenges of integrating tribal health clinics into the Section 330 HRSA funding model.
- Gary shared his experience as the first tribe to receive Section 330 funding and highlighted that many tribes are unaware of this opportunity.
- The Section 330 program under HRSA can provide funding for community health centers, with the stipulation that they serve the broader community at a sliding fee scale, open to all.
- Tribes automatically become FQHCs when applying for Section 330 but face a challenging application process that requires extensive pre-planning.
- Gary emphasized the importance of pre-studies and readiness if tribes are considering applying for Section 330 funding, highlighting the need for tribal leadership buy-in.
- Gary explained that tribes do not have to comply with the standard HRSA requirement of having 50% of board members as health center users.
- Tribes are encouraged to reach out for technical assistance and consider creative solutions in structuring health services to meet HRSA requirements.
- Benefits of Section 330 include significant HRSA resources, possibility of increased funding over initial \$650,000, and access to additional grants.
- Disadvantages include the need for broad community service, extensive oversight, potentially conflicting reporting dates, and potential tribal political challenges.

- Gary suggested that pursuing a lookalike FQHC status could be a strategic step for tribes before applying for full Section 330 funding.
- Concerns about UDS reporting were mentioned, highlighting issues with privacy and adherence to tribal data systems.
- A sliding fee scale is required for services, with templates available to assist in policy development and implementation.
- The \$650,000 initial funding cannot typically be used for EHR purchases; tribes should seek clarity on allowable expenses.

VI. Discussion on AIHC Legislative Priorities for 2026

Session - 1:40 PM PDT

Presented By Vicki Lowe, Heather Erb, Maria Ness

Link to [Legislative Updates Slide Deck](#)

- Discussion on continuing the Washington Tribal Opioid and Fentanyl Task Force, requiring \$250,000 for the annual summit and \$10,000 for reporting, funded by the Opioid Abatement Settlement Account.
- Proposal to track 100% FMAP savings from tribal clinic services to Medicaid enrollees, redirecting funds to a reinvestment account for healthcare projects, potentially up to \$50 million yearly.
- Proposed use of hospital community benefit funding for recovery coaches and peer support specialists connected to ER overdoses or behavioral health crises, requiring legislation.
- Discussion on an annual tribal law enforcement conference with costs estimated at \$40,000, examining potential funding sources.
- Proposal for \$200,000 funding for a tribal juvenile court pilot project, potentially requiring federal grants.
- Suggestion to continue support for tribal education staff in schools, requesting up to 30 tribal liaisons across the state.
- Discussion on continued funding for Native Lives campaign and Native and Strong lifeline, with current funding at \$3.2 million per biennium.
- Request for policy development to support culturally-based preventive services, with a focus on tribal frameworks.
- **Action Item** - Drafting legislative proposal to require hospitals to notify tribal providers before discharging tribal members.
- Exploration of peer support in hospital ERs, paid for by hospitals, as a recommendation for legislation.
- Consideration of Public Records Act exemption for data related to American and Alaska Natives and Indian tribes.
- Discussion on expanding the definition of resilience in state law for grant and funding purposes.
- **Decision** - Decision to try and negotiate directly with hospitals for appropriate information sharing rather than pursuing legislation.

VII. AIHC Executive Committee Updates - 2:05 PM PDT

Presented By Steve Kutz, Summer Hammons, Maureen Kinley, Sarah Sullivan, Linda Lauch

- Discussion about the challenges faced in housing, specifically dealing with eviction processes, housing for those in unhealthy living conditions, and systemic barriers that lead to elders being evicted.
- In preparation for an intensive day treatment program, there will be housing provided for members involved in the program, and rules for these housing arrangements are being developed. A timeline of about two months post-treatment is being considered for the next steps of transition.
- Tiny houses and temporary accommodations are being repurposed for nightly stays to provide housing with minimal barriers.
- The tribe acknowledges the limited resources available to solve all housing problems and discusses the idea of creating pallet homes with minimal barriers for individuals who need them.
- There is a suggestion to look into Grant Ross's system for potential solutions as the program develops, with a recommendation to revisit after six months for evaluation.
- Ongoing discussions are focused on identifying what steps need to be taken by next year to address housing issues in tribal communities, including obtaining funding lists from relevant state authorities.
- The need for coordinated efforts with state entities like the Department of Health (DOH) and other health authorities is emphasized, alongside keeping informed about amendments relevant to 2026 funding appropriations.

VIII. OB3/HR1 Impacts to Washington State Tribes - 2:25 PM PDT

- A presentation on strategies addressing 'One Big Beautiful Act' was given. The focus was on its impacts at the Washington state level, specifically looking at tribal impacts.
- There is an internal document analyzing tribal and state strategies to mitigate the impact of federal legislation, addressing changes like Medicaid cuts, potential loss of healthcare coverage for 10 million individuals over the next decade, and tribal access to healthcare services.
- The document includes strategies for enhanced collaboration with tribes and potential changes in the Indian healthcare delivery system.
- It's suggested that more Native people be brought into the Indian healthcare delivery system to mitigate patient load issues.
- Agencies are encouraged to trust tribal staff with healthcare administration and income verification to lessen the burden on state staff.
- Discussion on allowing tribal assisters to take on tasks typically handled by healthcare authority staff, like verifying income, to improve efficiency and prevent coverage loss.
- The presentation included strategies like supporting and enhancing the role of tribal assisters, which may involve additional training to handle their expanded roles efficiently.

- A collaborative discussion on maintaining tribal health program strategies is ongoing, with multiple approaches being considered, and feedback from tribes will continuously be integrated.
- **Action Item** - There is a plan to share the strategy document with tribes in a PDF format to collect feedback effectively. The first version will be sent out soon for review and comments.
- **Action Item** - The need to clean up the document and ensure the sharing link works before distribution. A deadline of the end of the week or early next week was proposed.

Meeting Adjournment

- The meeting was concluded. A 5-minute break was proposed before starting the Executive Session at 3:30.