



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY**

626 8th Avenue, SE • P.O. Box 45502 • Olympia, Washington 98504-5502

May 31, 2023

Dear Tribal Leader:

**SUBJECT: Opioid Abatement Settlement Tribal Set-Aside Implementation Listening Session**

In accordance with (A) chapter 43.376 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) regarding collaboration with Indian tribes in the development of policies, agreements, and program implementation that directly affect Indian tribes, and (B) the Tribal Consultation and Communication Policy of the Health Care Authority (HCA) and the Department of Health (DOH), HCA and DOH hereby seeks your advice on the following matter.

**Purpose**

The HCA and several other agencies will be involved in the use of opioid abatement settlement dollars appropriated during the last legislative sessions. In the budget, the legislature allocated 20% of the abatement funds to Tribes, which amounts to 15.4 million dollars. HCA will soon begin the process of using these opioid settlement dollars as specified during the session.

Through discussion at the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Opioid Response Workgroup, HCA will be holding a listening session to discuss the specific Tribal allocation of the opioid settlement dollars during the 2023-2025 biennium and gather feedback on how the HCA can best pass that through to Tribal governments.

Information about the upcoming Tribal Listening Session planned for this is as follows:

**Meeting – Tribal Listening Session – June 20, 2023 – 3:00pm – 4:30pm -**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86001146221>

**Background**

The HCA and DOH thank the Tribal representatives that provided feedback during Consultation that was held on planning for the opioid abatement settlement plan recommendations held on October 20, 2022. The HCA and DOH remain committed to collaborating with Tribal communities. The Consultation resulted in a recommendation of an opioid settlement fund Tribal set aside distributed directly to Tribes.

During the 2023 Legislative Session opioid settlement dollars were appropriated for use during the 2023-2025 biennium. Opioid settlement funding provisos are contained in the final conference budget from the 2023 regular session and E2SSB 5536 during the special session.

Dear Tribal Leader  
May 31, 2023  
Page 2

These appropriations were assigned across four agencies: the Health Care Authority, Department of Health, Labor and Industries, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. State opioid settlement funds include the recommended distribution to Tribes of more than \$15 million dollars. In addition to these state funds, opioid settlement funds are also being distributed directly to cities and counties across the state from multiple settlements. It will be important to discuss and understand the use of local funds as well so that Tribes may be able to collaborate with local governments.

For more information regarding the opioid settlement funds in the state budget settlement please see the following links:

- [Final Conference Budget Report](#)
- [Second Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5536](#)

### **Anticipated impact on Indians/Indian Health Programs/Urban Indian Organizations**

AI/AN communities have significant disparities in opioid related overdoses, deaths, and prevalence of opioid use disorders. The final conference budget included a direct distribution to Tribes. There are other opioid settlement funding provisos that may be of benefit to Tribal communities.

### **Comments and questions**

To return any comments, please contact Kris Shera, State Opioid Coordinator, via email at [kris.shera@hca.wa.gov](mailto:kris.shera@hca.wa.gov).

Please contact Aren Sparck, Tribal Affairs Administrator, HCA, via email at [aren.sparck@hca.wa.gov](mailto:aren.sparck@hca.wa.gov), if you have any tribal affairs-related questions.

Please forward this information to any interested party.

Sincerely,



Charissa Fotinos, MD, MSc  
Medicaid and Behavioral Health Medical Director  
Medicaid Services Administration

cc: Michael Langer, Deputy Division Director, DBHR, HCA  
Aren Sparck, Tribal Affairs Administrator, OTA, HCA  
Lucilla Mendoza, Tribal BH Administrator, OTA, HCA  
Kris Shera, State Opioid Coordinator, DHBR, HCA