



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY**

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

March 17, 2025

Dear Tribal Leaders:

SUBJECT: Managed Care Organization (MCO) and Behavioral Health – Administrative Services Organization (BH-ASO) July 1, 2025, Contract Amendments

In accordance with chapter 43.376 RCW and the Washington State Centennial Accord of 1989 regarding collaboration with Indian tribes in the development of policies, agreements, and program implementation that directly affect Indian tribes and the Tribal Consultation and Communication Policy of the Health Care Authority (HCA), the HCA seeks your input and partnership to advance initiatives impacting Tribal communities.

Purpose

The HCA is working on updating our contracts with our MCOs and BH-ASO and requests your feedback on our updated contract language.

For the current contracts amendment cycle, HCA acknowledges that there are changes impacting IHCPs, Tribal governments, and AI/AN individuals as we work toward incorporating elements of the [House Bill 1877](#), an act to improve the Washington State behavioral health system for better coordination and recognition with the Indian behavioral health system.

HCA can accept feedback from Tribal partners on these contracts at any time, however our timeframe to add recommendations and address concerns is dependent on our contract amendment timeline scheduled to be updated every 6 months in January and July of each year. Updates are made several months in advance to allow time for internal and external contracts negotiations. For current contract updates for the July 1, 2025, start date, HCA can accept feedback and language recommendations by the following timeframes.

- MCO comments/questions due by March 31, 2025.
- BH-ASO comments/questions due by April 9, 2025.

For future contract changes, HCA's Medicaid Programs Division and the Office of Tribal Affairs are committed to develop a structured approach to incorporate a comment period for Tribal partners, with the goal to ensure Tribes are informed about the amendment process and contract updates impacting health service delivery.

Background

The HCA offers [managed care](#) to Medicaid enrollees in all regions statewide. Managed care plans coordinate physical health, mental health, and substance use disorder treatment services to provide whole person-care under one health plan. Most Medicaid enrollees have an MCO, however American Indian and Alaska Native individuals are not required to be in managed care, providing the option to sign up, otherwise remain in Medicaid without a managed care program.

The HCA contracts with [BH-ASOs](#) to provide services that help individuals navigate through mental health or substance use disorder treatment and crisis services when needed and within available resources. Crisis services, such as 24/7/365 regional crisis hotlines, mobile crisis outreach teams, involuntary treatment act investigations and detention petitions when individuals are deemed to be a risk to self, others, or gravely disabled, are provided through regional BH-ASOs for anyone experiencing crisis across the state.

Model contracts can be found at the following link [Model managed care contracts | Washington State Health Care Authority](#).

Questions and Comments

A copy of both the MCO contract and BH-ASO contract changes are available upon request. Due to our operational timelines, for this amendment starting July 1, 2025, please provide feedback by the dates listed above. Any requests and feedback made after these dates will be considered for the next amendment cycle.

To provide feedback and to share any questions or concerns regarding these contracts, please contact Lucilla Mendoza by email at lucilla.mendoza@hca.wa.gov.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Aren Sparck at aren.sparck@hca.wa.gov.

Please forward this information to any interested party.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Charissa Fotinos MD, MSc".

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

cc: Aren Sparck, Tribal Affairs Administrator, OTA, HCA
Christine Winn, Deputy Tribal Affairs Administrator, OTA, HCA
Lucilla Mendoza, Tribal Behavioral Health Administrator, OTA, HCA
Thao Nguyen, Unit Supervisor, MPD, HCA
Ruth Leonard, Section Supervisor, MPD, HCA
Cyndi Presnell, Contract Change Management Specialist, MPD, HCA