



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY**

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

October 30, 2025

Dear Tribal Leader:

**SUBJECT: Washington state's Traditional Health Care Practices waiver —
notice of application and public comment period**

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), HCA seeks to inform and request input on the following matter.

In partnership with Tribes and Indian health care providers, HCA will submit a five-year Traditional Health Care Practices waiver application to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in December 2025. If approved, the waiver could begin as soon as July 1, 2026. Our goals are to:

- Affirm Tribal Sovereignty by recognizing traditional health care practices as an essential component of the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) health system in Washington state.
- Expand people's access to traditional health care practices provided by or through qualified facilities in Washington state.
- Integrate traditional health care practices into the broader continuum of care, complementing Western medical practices with options that reflect AI/AN cultures, values, and connectedness.
- Improve health outcomes for AI/AN people and increase the use of traditional health care practices in Native communities.

This waiver is one way Washington state can ensure Tribes are recognized — and paid — for providing traditional health care services. Under this waiver, CMS would allow certain types of facilities to provide traditional health care services as “qualifying facilities,” including:

- Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities
- Tribal facilities
- Urban Indian Health Organizations (UIHOs), depending on state funding from the Legislature

When a qualifying facility provides traditional health care services to an eligible Apple Health or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enrollee, Medicaid will reimburse (pay) that facility for the service.

How the waiver will affect Native communities and AI/AN people

The Traditional Health Care Practices waiver is a significant step in:

- Improving access to culturally relevant, holistic care
- Addressing health disparities
- Promoting health equity
- Helping preserve cultural practices
- Helping Tribes provide whole-person care for their communities through a stronger, more effective health care system for Native people

Public comment period

As part of the waiver application, HCA is holding a public comment period from **November 5 to December 5, 2025**. During this time, people can share their input on the waiver application or other comments about traditional health care practices. Public comment is open to anyone who would like to share their input, especially Tribal Nations, Indian health care providers, UIHOs, Tribal health organizations, and Native-serving organizations.

The deadline to provide public comment is Friday, December 5, at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time.

Public hearings

In partnership with Lummi Nation and Yakama Nation, HCA's Office of Tribal Affairs (OTA) will offer two public hearings to share information about the waiver. During the hearings, attendees will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide input. Attendees can attend in person, join virtually, or call in.

Tribe	Date and time	Location	Zoom and call-in information
Yakama Nation	Fri., November 14, 2025 1–2:30 p.m.	Legends Casino Hotel 580 Fort Road Toppenish, WA 98948	Join on Zoom Meeting ID: 817 3643 0815 Call in: 1-253-215-8782 (Tacoma) 1-253-205-0468 (U.S.) See more information on how to join.
Lummi Nation	Wed., November 19, 2025 1–2:30 p.m.	2616 Kwina Road Bellingham, WA 98226	Join on Zoom Meeting ID: 875 6272 8945 Call in: 1-253-215-8782 (Tacoma) 1-253-205-0468 (U.S.) See more information on how to join.

Additional opportunities

In December 2025, we will also offer an OTA listening session and Tribal Consultation for Tribes to share their input.

Meeting type	Date and time	Zoom and call-in information
OTA listening session Attendees can join virtually or call in.	Thurs., December 11, 2025 10–11 a.m.	Join on Zoom Meeting ID: 845 3876 0381 Call in: 1-253-215-8782 (Tacoma) 1-253-205-0468 (U.S.) See more information on how to join.
OTA Tribal Consultation Attendees can attend in person, join virtually, or call in.	Tues., December 16, 2025 10:30 a.m.–noon Health Care Authority Cherry Street Plaza Eagle Conference Room 552 626 8 th Avenue SE Olympia, WA 98501 View the visitor map and parking information.	Join on Zoom Meeting ID: 852 6971 9937 Call in: 1-253-215-8782 (Tacoma) 1-253-205-0468 (U.S.) See more information on how to join.

More information — including full details about the waiver and other ways to provide public comment — will be available on our [Traditional Health Care Practices waiver page](#). **This page will go live on Wednesday, November 5.**

We look forward to our continued partnership with you!

Contact

For more information about the Traditional Health Care Practices waiver, please contact Medicaid Transformation Tribal Liaison [Lena Nachand](#). For any Tribal affairs-related questions or concerns, contact Tribal Affairs Administrator [Aren Sparck](#).

Please forward this information to any interested party.

Sincerely,



Aren Sparck
Tribal Affairs Administrator

By email

cc: Lena Nachand, Medicaid Transformation Tribal Liaison, HCA
Annette Squetinkin-Anquoe, Health Care Program Manager, HCA