



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

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

August 19, 2025

Dear Tribal Leader:

SUBJECT: Traditional Health Care Practices Workgroup on the 1115 Waiver to Reimburse for Traditional Health Care Services

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 hereby seeks to inform and request input on the following matter.

Purpose

During the 2025 Legislative Session, the HCA received direction from the Washington State Legislature to apply for a section 1115 waiver to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) no later than December 31, 2025, with the intent to provide Medicaid coverage for traditional health care practices, also known as Traditional Indian Medicine (TIM). As required under 42 CFR § 431.408(b), HCA is collaborating with Tribes and Indian health care providers (IHCPs) of Washington State to establish a traditional health care practices workgroup for the planning and implementation of a traditional health care services framework.

Traditional health care practices and services have been a part of the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) holistic health care system long before Western medicine was introduced. Historically traditional health care was provided and supported by tribal networks within the community. Today, tribal communities carry out their own forms of traditional health care which are accessed and provided privately, or in coordination with tribal programs and/or Western health care service organizations. This 1115 waiver will be designed for WA State to show the positive effects of providing coverage for traditional health care services and, ultimately, improving the health and wellbeing among our tribal communities.

HCA plans to apply, in partnership with Washington State Tribes and urban Indian communities, for a section 1115 waiver application.

HCA will hold traditional health care workgroup meetings from September – December 2025 with a focus on the CMS 1115 demonstration waiver application. We are asking Tribes and UIHOs to identify a workgroup member by August 29, 2025. The first workgroup is scheduled for Tuesday, September 9, 2025, from 1 PM – 2 PM. Subsequent traditional health care workgroup meetings will depend on the status of the waiver application. Additionally, OTA plans to meet with Tribes and UIHPs individually to gather feedback on their traditional health care services within their communities.

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To submit the name of a tribal representative for the traditional health care workgroup, please contact Annette Squetinkin-Anquoe by email at annette.squetimkin-anquoe@hca.wa.gov no later than August 29, 2025.

Comments and Questions

Please contact Aren Spark, Tribal Affairs Administrator, via email at aren.spark@hca.wa.gov, if you have tribal affairs-related questions.

Please forward this information to any interested party.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aren Spark', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Aren Sparck
Tribal Affairs Administrator

Enclosure

By email

cc: Charissa Fotinos, Medicaid Director, HCA
Lena Nachand, Tribal Liaison, OTA, HCA