

June 20, 2007

**NORTHWEST
PORTLAND
AREA
INDIAN
HEALTH
BOARD**

Burns-Paiute Tribe
Chehalis Tribe
Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Colville Tribe
Coos, Suislaw &
Lower Umpqua Tribe
Coquille Tribe
Cow Creek Tribe
Cowlitz Tribe
Grand Ronde Tribe
Hoh Tribe
Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
Kalispel Tribe
Klamath Tribe
Kootenai Tribe
Lower Elwha Tribe
Lummi Tribe
Makah Tribe
Muckleshoot Tribe
Nez Perce Tribe
Nisqually Tribe
Nooksack Tribe
NW Band of Shoshoni Tribe
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
Puyallup Tribe
Quileute Tribe
Quinalt Tribe
Samish Indian Nation
Sauk-Suiattle Tribe
Shoalwater Bay Tribe
Shoshone-Bannock Tribe
Siletz Tribe
Skokomish Tribe
Snoqualmie Tribe
Spokane Tribe
Squaxin Island Tribe
Stillaguamish Tribe
Suquamish Tribe
Swinomish Tribe
Tulalip Tribe
Umatilla Tribe
Upper Skagit Tribe
Warm Springs Tribe
Yakama Nation

Dear Idaho Tribal Chairs:

As the Board's Nez Perce Delegate and an Idaho Tribal leader, I am writing to you concerning the lack of Tribal participation at the quarterly Idaho State/Tribes meetings. These meetings are jointly facilitated by Idaho State's Department of Health & Welfare (DHW) and the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board and work to improve Tribal access to services in the state of Idaho.

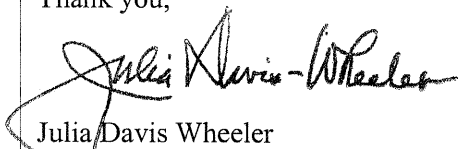
While I have been away from these meetings for the past two years—and am now back involved—I have noticed a significant decrease in Tribal participation. Idaho Tribes and the Board worked very hard to get these important meetings to become a regular meeting occurrence between Idaho's DHW and Idaho Tribal leaders and our health program staff. The meetings provide an opportunity for us to dialogue with state officials on important health policy and program issues. The meetings are beneficial for the state to understand Tribal concerns and have had a positive outcome by improving access to health services for Indian people.

I am reaching out to encourage you to recommit to attend and participate in these very important meetings. At a minimum, I am hopeful that you will commit to send your Tribal Health Director to these meetings. While I understand there are financial limitations associated with sending more than one person to a meeting, business office, and billing staff would benefit from participating in these meetings. They often have the expertise on many of the issues and provide for better dialogue with the state. Our next meeting is scheduled for August 2-3, 2007, and will be held in Boise, Idaho. A meeting notice and preliminary agenda are attached for your review and planning purpose. We will send an updated agenda as we approach the date of the meeting.

By recommitting to the Idaho State/Tribes meetings, I am hoping that we will once again have much more meaningful meetings that work to improve the quality of health care services to our Tribal members. In addition, Ms. Verné Boerner, NPAIHB Administrative Officer, will be working with me to coordinate the Idaho State/Tribes meetings. Feel free to contact or send your agenda request to Verné at (503) 228-4185 or by email vboerner@npaihb.org.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

Thank you,


Julia Davis Wheeler
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Nez Perce Tribal Council Member

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