


TRIBAL PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE  
 FEASIBILITY PROJECT

## Exploring New Pathways to Support Tribal Health: Assessing the Feasibility of Developing a Tribal Public Health Institute (TPHI)

*Donald Warne, MD, MPH  
 Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board  
 Quarterly Board Meeting  
 October 22, 2014*



Support for this project was provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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## Objectives

- Discuss the changing face of Tribal public health
- Highlight the emergence of public health institutes across the U.S. and the world
- Share findings gathered through Tribal engagement activities about the potential role of a TPHI
- Discuss next steps and obtain recommendations about the potential structure and governance of a TPHI

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## Challenges and Opportunities

- Little investment in developing Tribal public health
- Tribes aren't always at the table for national PH
  - Balancing leadership and expertise
- Tribes are developing infrastructure to meet the changing needs of members
  - Processes, models, systems, data management
- Largely regionalized system – duplication of effort
- Services largely driven by state/federal funding
- Strong focus on healthcare and federal policy

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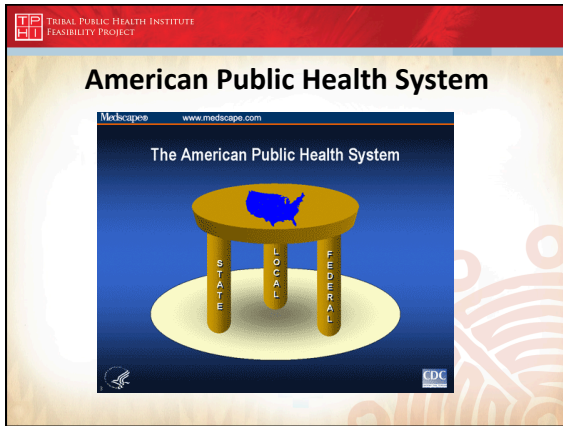
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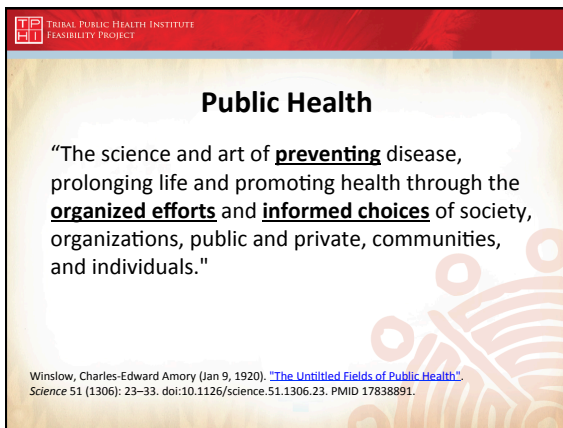
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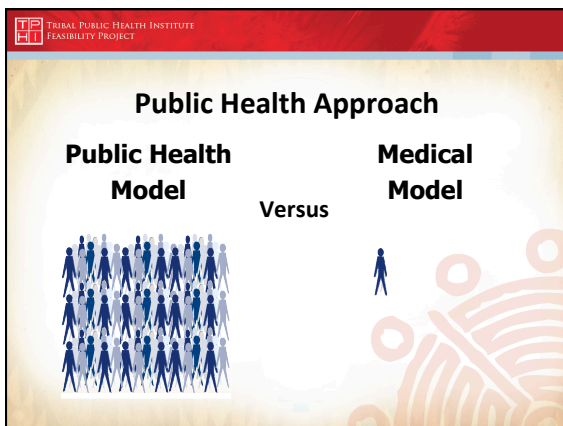
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**Public Health Ten Essential Services**

1. Monitor health status
2. Diagnose and investigate
3. Inform and educate
4. Mobilize communities to identify problems
5. Develop policies and plans
6. Enforce laws and regulations
7. Link people to needed health services
8. Assure a competent healthcare workforce
9. Evaluate health services
10. Conduct research

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**National Initiatives**

Nat'l Public Health Performance Standards Program	Developed by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Public Health Accreditation	Funded by CDC; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)
National Public Health Improvement Initiative	Funded by CDC
Public Health Institutes	Early investments by CDC and RWJF

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**What are Public Health Institutes?**

- Non-profit, non-governmental organizations
- Engage strategic partners to address gaps in existing systems
- Act in the best interest of those they serve and adapt quickly to changing health priorities
- Train the workforce and develop leadership and management
- Serve as a neutral convener of stakeholders to identify solutions to shared concerns

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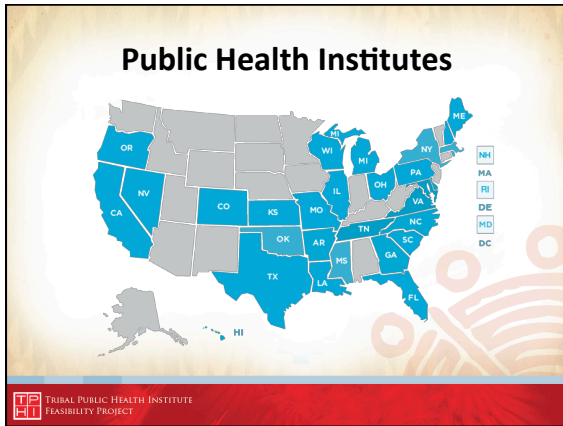
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### Could a TPHI be a solution?

- Is there *interest* and *support* among Tribes and Tribal Organizations for a TPHI?
- Is there a role for a *neutral* entity performing these functions?
- How should it be *structured* and *governed*?
- How much will it cost and how can we ensure *sustainability*?

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### How do we know there is a need for a TPHI?

- Convened a national Tribal public health advisory board
- Conducted a comprehensive ‘Needs and Assets’ assessment of Tribal public health
  - National survey of public health activities performed by existing Tribally Led Organizations (TLOs)
  - Regional and national roundtables; presentations and interviews
- Conducted an environmental scan of national public health initiatives and activities

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[http://redstar1.org/tphifeasibilityproject/lib/docs/tphi\\_findings\\_report.pdf](http://redstar1.org/tphifeasibilityproject/lib/docs/tphi_findings_report.pdf)



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### Opportunities – Tribal Level

- Serve as a trusted source of information for Tribal leaders, decision makers and administrators
- Resources and support to develop Tribal public health infrastructure (systems, processes, coordination)
  - Independent from federal and state agencies
- Develop evidence and experience based resources that are culturally relevant (research and evaluation)
- Nation building – executive leadership development, training, technical assistance; public health law and policy
- Serve as a central location for information, resource materials, practice models and technical assistance

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### System-wide Coordination

- Build capacity of the existing Tribal System (Tribes and Regional/National TLOs)
  - Address system disparities in infrastructure and capacities
  - Develop national reports on tribal public health needs
- Connect “the system” – creating strategic linkages
  - Work with Tribal Epi Centers to bridge data gaps across regions
- Multi-relationship development – working across state and federal issues
  - Infectious disease, emergency response
- Tribal and TLOs workforce development; peer learning and networking

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### Interface with Federal Government

- Liaise with federal agencies, foundations and other public health entities
- Advocate for equitable investments for public health
- Provide technical expertise to increase Tribal involvement in national public health initiatives
- Assist federal agencies with resourcing Tribes
  - What is funded
  - Request for proposal (RFP) process
  - Provide technical assistance to Tribes throughout RFP process (proposal writing and grant implementation)

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### Challenges to the Concept

- Perceived competition for limited resources
- Educate about the concept and value add
- Equitize benefits while respecting diverse capacities
- Establish trust and managing important relationships
- Develop the right linkages early on – early wins; generating buy-in

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### What did we learn?

- **There IS *interest and support*** among Tribes and Tribal Organizations for a TPHI
- **There IS a role for a *neutral entity*** performing these functions

### What questions remain?

- How should it be *structured and governed*?
- How much will it cost and how can we ensure *sustainability*?

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### What organizational structures were explored?

- Stand-alone, 501(c)3 non-profit organization
- Stand-alone, 501(c)3 non-profit association or membership organization
  - Individuals, organizations or governments with the objective achieving a common purpose and/or goal
- 501(c)3 non-profit organization operating independently; housed within an existing TLO
- Subunit within an existing TLO

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### What did we learn about structure?

- TLOs are typically program based
  - Community advisory committees to inform programming
  - Tribal Epi Centers have community/technical committees
- PHIs are typically “Flat and wide”
  - Center-based or program-based
  - Functional competencies/Service-based
  - Technical committees inform governance and programming

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### What does a TPHI need to be able to do?

- Demonstrate entrepreneurial leadership
- Hire Tribal public health professionals and technical experts to implement services
  - Research, evaluation, health IT, policy, communications, program/curriculum design
- Build data infrastructure, create IT learning centers, develop systems
- Ensure sound fiscal and administrative management and practices
- Generate revenue for sustainability and re-granting

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### What are the pros/cons of a stand alone structure?

- Unique and independent identity
- Develop new and important relationships with beneficiaries and strategic partners
- Flexibility to develop internal processes and infrastructure
- Greater neutrality - equal voice and representation
- Resource and time intensive

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### What are the pros/cons of a subunit structure?

- Benefit from existing relationships
- Established reputation of parent entity
- Possible core funding and/or operational services (accounting, human resources)
- Restricted decision making and ability to seek certain categories of funding

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### What needs to be considered when developing the structure a TPHI?

- By Tribes for Tribes
- Form follows function
- How do we ensure the governance and structure will support
  - Sustainability
  - Technical expertise, capacity, relationships, flexibility
  - Broad representation, neutrality and system support
  - Exist to serve the “system” – including all primary beneficiaries

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### What did we hear from Tribes about governance?

- Respect and reflect the needs of Tribes, including Tribal cultures and traditions
- Develop the governing board by-laws, values and principles to align with original spirit and intent
  - Tribally led and driven to be for the people
- Serve as a “neutral convener” bringing innovative ideas and enhances Tribe-to-Tribe communication
- Respect the role of existing partners at the Tribal, regional and national levels
- Serve primarily as a broad-based source of information to support existing and future advocacy efforts

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### What did we learn about governance?

- TLOs are governed by member Tribes' highest elected officials - "by reason of their office"
- PHIs are typically governed by senior leadership representing various sectors
  - Selected based on experience, professional relationships, knowledge, and/or skills
- Associations are typically governed by selected senior leadership or elected at-large by members

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### What needs to be considered to determine governance?

***Governing body will be dependent on structure***

- Maintain a governance structure (leadership) that is representative of those it serves
- Engage beneficiaries in governance
- Engage individuals with knowledge, experience and skills in Tribal public health
- Balance advocacy efforts by serving primarily as a broad-based source of information

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### A TPHI Would Need To:

- Recognize and respect Tribal sovereignty and self determination
- Emphasize innovation in addressing tribally-specific health issues
- Be a teaching and learning organization; keenly aware of things on the horizon
- Respect Tribal diversity and services already available and provided
- Be self-aware of the impact it may have on those it serves

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## TPHI Feasibility Phase II

- Tribal engagement to determine structure and governance
- Regional presentations, roundtables and organizational interviews
- **National Tribal Leaders Forum March 11-12, 2015**
- Identify and engage potential funders and supporters
- Create a “blueprint” report summarizing findings to guide the development of a TPHI

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**NATIONAL TRIBAL LEADERS FORUM**  
**SAVE THE DATE!**

*“Exploring New Pathways to Support American Indian and Alaska Native Health”*

**March 11 - 12, 2015**  
Phoenix, Arizona - Wild Horse Pass Hotel and Casino

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For more information:

[www.redstar1.org/tphifeasibilityproject](http://www.redstar1.org/tphifeasibilityproject)  
Email [info@redstar1.org](mailto:info@redstar1.org) and join email list



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