

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'Klaliam Tribe Puyallup Tribe Quileute Tribe Quinault 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 Suguamish Tribe Swinomish Tribe Tulalip Tribe Umatilla Tribe

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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 <a href="mailto:vboerner@npaihb.org">vboerner@npaihb.org</a>.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

Thank you,

Julia Davis Wheeler NPAIHB Delegate,

Nez Perce Tribal Council Member