



March 23, 2020

Dear Tribal Leaders, Delegates and Tribal Health Directors

**NORTHWEST
PORTLAND
AREA
INDIAN
HEALTH
BOARD**

Burns-Paiute Tribe
Chehalis Tribe
Coeur d' Alene Tribe
Colville Tribe
Coos, Siuslaw, &
Lower Umpqua Tribe
Coquille Tribe
Cow Creek Tribe
Cowlitz Tribe
Grand Ronde Tribe
Hoh Tribe
Jamestown S' Klallam Tribe
Kalispell 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
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
Suquamish Tribe
Swinomish Tribe
Tulalip Tribe
Umatilla Tribe
Upper Skagit Tribe
Warm Springs Tribe
Yakama Nation

Three short years ago, in February 2017, President Trump made the comment that “nobody knew health care could be so complicated”. At the time, he was talking about health insurance and the Affordable Care Act, and those of us that work in health and health policy all had a good laugh at his comment. Now, we are dealing with incredibly complex health needs in all of our communities because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Right now, in this time of uncertainty, it is important for all of our Tribes to issue orders for community members to stay home, take a little time to look ahead, and continue to ask the federal government to honor treaty and trust obligations.

As you know, the Board of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board passed a resolution (20-02-06) available at www.npaihb.org/covid-19. Several tribes including the Lummi Nation and Makah Nation have instituted shelter in place orders, in line with this resolution. I encourage all tribal leaders to take this action immediately to protect their communities.

Tribes may also want to plan for longer term closures of businesses while continuing to think about prevention, treatment and recovery actions. There will be multiple funding streams available in the near future from federal and state agencies. For recovery, I strongly encourage all of you to take the time to develop response teams that can track the social, economic, and health-related impacts that this pandemic and subsequent shutdown(s) have had and will continue to have on our Tribes.

As we watch what is unfolding at the federal and state level, we are seeing states (like Washington) ignore government-to-government consultation when requesting federal waivers. We are also seeing federal agencies like the Center for Disease Control delay in distributing funding to tribes because of internal bureaucratic barriers. These delays are at the expense of all our people and does not honor trust and treaty obligations.

Most importantly, Tribes should reach out and help one another whenever possible. In this difficult time, we need each other to get through this pandemic.

Please feel free to reach out to NPAIHB Executive Director Laura Platero, JD at (503) 407-4082 or by e-mail at lplatero@npaihb.org or myself Nickolaus Lewis, NPAIHB Chairman and Lummi Indian Business Council at (360) 303-6084 or by e-mail at NickolausL@lummi-nsn.gov

Sincerely,

Nickolaus D. Lewis
NPAIHB Chairman
Lummi Indian Business Council

2121 S.W. Broadway
Suite 300
Portland, OR 97201
Phone: (503) 228-4185
Fax: (503) 228-8182
www.npaihb.org