



## **AACIHC BOARD MEETING MINUTES – June 17, 2024, 1PM – 3 PM**

### **Voting Members Present:**

Daniel Preston III, Tohono O’odham Nation  
Deanna Sangster, Native Health, Health Service Administrator  
Candida Hunter, First Things First  
Christine Holden, Tribal Liaison, AHCCCS  
Gerilene Haskon, Tribal Liaison, ADHS  
Verna Johnson, Inter Tribal Council AZ

### **Federal Technical Advisor Present:**

Cynthia Lemesh & Lee Herko, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

### **Staff, Guests and Visitors Present:**

Alison Lovell, AACIHC Business Op Administrator  
Archie Mariano, AACIHC Program Specialist - CCR  
Ariana Granger, AACIHC Program Specialist - HD  
Ashley Lazaro, AACIHC Grants Manager - CCR  
Corey Hemstreet, AACIHC Legislative Specialist  
Darien Fuller, AACIHC Epidemiologist - HD  
Debra Gonzales, AACIHC Executive Assistant  
Dr. John Ward Molina, AACIHC Director  
Ernestine Nasingoetewa, AACIHC Grants Coordinator-AHEC  
Jeffrey Axtell, AACIHC Grants Director - AHEC  
Keye Garman, AACIHC Sr. Epidemiologist  
Kiani Becerra, AACIHC Communications Coordinator  
Mckayla Keams, AACIHC Exec Projects Coordinator  
Shealee Gartner, AACIHC Training Officer III  
Tashina Machain, AACIHC Grants Coordinator-AHEC

### **Meeting Called to Order at 1:05 PM**

**Welcome and Introductions** – John asked everyone present to introduce themselves

**Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum** – Debra did a roll call; Quorum was established

**Adoption of Meeting Agenda (Action Item)** Candida made a motion to adopt the agenda of this board meeting, Gerilene seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously

**Approval of Meeting Minutes (Action Item)**

- **April 15, 2024 (Action Item)** Candida made a motion to approve the minutes of the last board meeting, Gerilene seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously

## Reports

- **Director's Report** – John reviewed in brief his director's report that had already been sent to the board ahead of time.
  - The team is currently exercising the predictive index, which is a tool to increase understanding of our personal strength and characteristics as a staff or the agency. This will really help us in improving our engagement and productivity as well as sort of fill in any gaps in our Team Dynamics and communication.
  - Many on the team have been attending State and national conferences
  - We have been providing technical assistance for tribes and tribal organizations in there for Grant applications
  - We have applied for a couple of Grants, and one is strengthening Public Health Systems Grant which we'll find out in August- November whether we've been accepted
  - We've initiated a webinar training series to provide technical assistance to tribal members on the variety of topics like health and wellness billing epidemiology health education and that we're anticipating maybe three training courses per week, and it's been going well
  - John has been participating in the strategic planning session for the Governor's task force On MMIP which continues, and we expect to have a final report to the governor by the end of the year.
  - John has been consulting with AHCCCS on their quarterly tribal consultation meetings
- **Business/Finance Updates** (if State budget is approved and available) - Alison Lovell briefed the board
  - We still have not received the new budget yet, and that's each state agency, not just the AACIHC
  - The state fiscal year runs from July 1st of every year to June 30th of the following year – so we will enter FY25 on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - We are in the process of requesting the next State Fiscal Year (SFY) budget request, which is SFY26. The reason that that is being done is to make sure that the governor's office is aware that we all need these things that we are requesting. Our grants are ending, over the next six months to year and a half, and for those that are ending they're doing important health education activities out in the community. Due to this we requested 3 health education positions last year, to absorb those. Fortunately, we were able to obtain permission to use some of our excess State appropriations for the year

(which we had due to some positions not being filled in July and August as they were new positions last year) to fund one of our grants' salaries and their fringe benefits for the rest of the year. This allowed us to preserve their funds, so they have enough funding to last through 12/31/2024.

- **Policy/Legislation Updates** – Corey Hemstreet briefed the board on any updates
  - The End of the 56th Legislature sine died on Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>
  - We've been championing an oral health Bill since the Inception of the advisory Council. It did not make it out of the house. It was assigned to the house and health and services appropriation and role agendas. And these things are actually really where they are filled at and they say we're assuming we're going to be supporting another oral health bill in 2025, but seeing where they died in the house helps me get a projection of what I need to meet with the HHS communities appropriation and rules and agendas because those are the main committees where a lot of our bills will go through especially when it has to come with a Medicaid change like appropriation and rules and depending on what type of Bill it is. A lot of our bills have been going through the Health and Human Services committee so something I have just been thinking of for 2025, with that said that and my legislative updates Not too much to report back on.
  - Chairman Preston had a question on FB1361 – he asked how long the governor has to sign it, Corey has indicated within her report she plans to do a more in-depth analysis of what specific changes are happening with these MMIP bills. She will be sure to circle back around on those.

## Old Business

- **AACIHC Strategic Plan Creation Strategy Overview/Update** - John Molina reviewed
  - This is our final AACIHC strategic plan draft that our team has worked on. We're doing the years 2024 to 2027. We've revised some of these statements. AACIHC Mission: The mission of the AACIHC is to serve as a resource for all Tribal governments and the State of Arizona by *supporting* prevention, training, education, workforce development, policy and legislation to meet the unique health care needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations in Arizona. We seek to educate and advocate for improved health outcomes.
  - On those statements. One of the things that we value as an agency and the work that you do as a council is that we are a trusted resource for tribal governments and organizations. And our goal is really to improve on Health Equity through policy changes and technical assistance because we really feel the empowerment of tribal Nations and communities and more so the empowerment of individuals to improve health outcomes for our people. (He continued to review the goals as they are currently)
  - The document will be shared with the board for review. One of the things that we want to add is baseline data to measure ourselves to see if we've been able to move the dial within health disparities regarding Health Equity.

## **New Business**

- Tribal Leaders and Public Health Directors Meeting on June 25th, 2024
- Traditional Healing AHCCCS Request to CMS – Corey and Alison spoke on traditional healing and that we were asked by AHCCCS to provide resources on how many people a traditional healer typically serves; we tried to do some of that research and it's really hard to find the answers. Although there is a lot of research on the effectiveness of traditional healing, there's not really any concrete data as to how many people they're serving. The Advisory Council is drafting an informational sheet to CMS and AHCCCS to highlight the effectiveness and the need for it. **Christine Holden** provided additional context: As we all know with the Western system, we're always faced with trying to justify ourselves and justify certain things and it's hard especially in those negotiations. It's been very difficult to get across to CMS that you're asking certain questions and it's not a one-size-fits-all situation. There are tribes who do not want to participate at all. There are other tribes who are fully embracing this and it's not so much a question of should we participate as much as it is our infrastructure and what we have going on in a place to support that type of thing and so unfortunately that has created some difficulty in terms of the supporting documentation that we've been made to provide because as we all know Western systems, they're heavily invested in support of evidence-based and statistics and numbers and that's not something even if in our communities that we're actually tracking, it's a little bit more involved, and the willingness each tribe to share this type of information.
- June 25th Strategic Planning Meeting Placeholder – This will be a virtual as well as in person meeting in the boardroom on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the 801 building.

**Call to the Public** – no response from the public

**Next Meeting Date** -Debra will send out a doodle once dates are looked at

**Adjournment** – meeting adjourned at 2:27 PM, motion by Candida, seconded by Deanna, motion passed unanimously