



**MINUTES FOR THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
ARIZONA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN HEALTH CARE**

Monday, Dec 10, 2024

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Voting Members Present:

Christine Holden, Tribal Liaison, AHCCCS
Gerilene Haskon, Tribal Liaison, ADHS
Deanna Sangster, Native Health, Health Service Administrator
Dave Dawley, Health Dept Director, Hualapai
Verna Johnson, Inter Tribal Council AZ

Federal Technical Advisor Present:

Cynthia Lemesh, Barbara Prehmus & Mandy Strom, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Staff, Guests and Visitors Present:

Alison Lovell, AACIHC Business Operations Administrator
Archie Mariano, AACIHC Program Specialist - CCR
Blake Su, AACIHC Policy Intern
Corey Hemstreet, AACIHC Legislative Specialist
Debra Gonzales, AACIHC Executive Assistant
Ernestine Nasingoetewa, AACIHC, AHEC Grants Coordinator-AHEC
Jeffrey Axtell, AACIHC, AHEC Grants Director – AHEC
Kiani Becerra, AACIHC Community Outreach Coordinator
Mckayla Keams, AACIHC, Exec Projects Coordinator
Shealee Gartner, AACIHC Training Officer III
Tashina Machain, AACIHC, AHEC Grants Coordinator-AHEC
John Scott, Director for the Arizona Department of Veteran Services (Guest Speaker)

Meeting Called to Order - at 2:36 PM

Welcome and Introductions – Alison asked that everyone introduce themselves round robin.

Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum – Quorum was made at 2:44 PM, with the five present that are listed above.

Adoption of this Meeting Agenda (Action Item) –

MOTION: Gereline Haskins moved that we accept the agenda for this meeting, Dave Dawley seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - Oct 15, 2024 (*Action Item*)

MOTION: Dave Dawley moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting; Verna Johnson seconded the motion – passed unanimously.

New Business

- a. **Traditional Healing Services for Native American Veterans - John F. Scott II, MSW - Director, Arizona Department of Veterans Services** – John Scott was in attendance as a guest speaker to make everyone aware of the program they are trying to implement currently. They were appropriated a million dollars to be able to provide traditional healing for Native American veterans throughout the entire state of Arizona. At this point he has sent letters out to all of the tribal leadership and is working to schedule consultations to be able to present this to the various tribes but has hit some roadblocks as far as communication. He had met with Dr. Molina at a cabinet meeting, and he was discussing efforts that were being made with some billing for traditional healing. He wanted to let everyone know that basically the way that the program is set up, it's an IGA between his agency and, whomever or whatever tribes decide that they want to participate. Essentially, they would find a traditional healer and then they would identify individuals that are veterans within the tribe and what type of ceremony would be provided and the subsequent cost that is attached to that and they would issue a check to the tribe so that the tribe can pay the tribal healer to do the program. And that really is the program itself - it's simple although they are finding that the communication element a little more difficult as well as trying to schedule time. We keep hearing that there's a continued need for tribal healing and we have this great opportunity. We're just having a hard time getting the money out so he asked Dr. Molina if he could present this at our next board meeting hoping you have some ideas and/or contacts that potentially can be useful to help put these meetings together. John gave the board his contact information.
 - a. Gerilene Haskon asked if there was a defined understanding of what traditional healing would look like for that community or does the tribe decide on what that would be defined as? John indicated that they would identify the veterans and what type of tribal healing ceremony they would require and what that would cost for the tribal healer. They don't set a dollar amount on that but would simply cut the check so that they could then provide the service.
 - b. Corey Hemstreet asked if Urban Indian Health organizations would qualify or is it simply for tribes? John indicated that the statute was very clear that the funds must go directly to the tribes. She also asked if there was a deadline on spending the money and John indicated there was none. Corey will also connect with John to get him into the traditional healing work groups.
- b. Corey Hemstreet, Legislative Specialist, AACIHC – will present on the upcoming legislative priorities

UPDATE ON FRAUD WASTE AND ABUSE - Corey indicated they have been having meetings with AHCCCS, the governor's office, and partners to work on the root cause analysis recommendations that were provided in a presentation to back in March.

AHCCCS is allegedly going through disallowance due to fraud, waste, and abuse. The restitution funds that are given to AHCCCS will be given back to the federal government per federal statute. Now the restitution funds are being divided by the attorney general's office and to AHCCCS. The disallowance is a formal notification that is sent to the state agency about the disallowance and what their steps should be for what that would look like for the state of Arizona. As mentioned, some of the money is also going to the Arizona Attorney General's Office, and I believe they have already announced that they have a \$6 million grant program to aid tribal nations that have been impacted by the Sober Living fraud. Although six million out of a two billion scam is not necessarily a lot, but, it's something. And I'm glad that some type of opportunity for tribes to recoup some of the funds to help their facilities address the fraud, waste, and abuse. The MMIP task force, AHCCCS and ADHS did have one of our scheduled meetings and I asked Director Heredia if she was going to inform the tribes about the disallowance, I didn't get an answer. This is something that's been brought up at AHCCCS's tribal consultation, what is going to happen to the restitution funds? We are seeking guidance from the advisory board members on how to move forward by informing tribes of the disallowance. To help with the conversation I'll ask Christine if she knows if there have been conversations on how they are going to inform the tribes of AHCCCS's disallowance. Cindy was asked if she has any background on, how much is it percentagewise or...is there a formula that they must abide by? What does that process look like?

Cindy indicated that the unit that would do this is the financial management group and she has not heard any formal discussions with them about what their role is going to be moving forward. Also because of the change in administration and end-of-year priorities this isn't something that will be addressed before the end of the year. I think that it is something where attention will be paid early next year.

Gerilene asked, to get further clarification, are you stating that the Arizona Attorney General's office did receive some dollars and they're utilizing that to give back to the tribal nations that have been impacted? So, are you stating that AHCCCS would have had the ability to do something like this?

Corey replied that if they were getting restitution funds and there was no disallowance, I imagine that they could have done something like what the attorney general's office is doing. I guess that was just my biggest concern. Again, the tribes have been asking about fraud, waste, and abuse restitution funds, and if there's going to be a disallowance, and unfortunately, right now, there's just no communication on that. I would really like the council's guidance on how to move forward or if this is something that we need to, table and have another discussion on it.

Corey stated that there is an upcoming tribal consultation with, AHCCCS and ADHS and what if the tribes keep asking again?

Gerilene mentioned we should follow the protocols of the tribal consultation, and when Christine or Britney send out the information of when they're sending out tribal leaders letters and when they're asking for agenda items at that time maybe one of the members that represent a tribal community can ask for this to be on the agenda and to include what

questions that you may have so that way they can be able to share that information at the consultation.

Deanna and Corey both agreed with Gerilene. Deanna added that she felt that AHCCCS needs to be the one to give this information to the tribes that it was the least they could do for everything that our people have gone through with this whole sober living home fraud. I think the people who have done all of these things have really gotten off easy because there was kidnapping, and no one was arrested for it and other stuff like that. There was much abuse in those homes.

TRADITIONAL HEALING Corey next addressed traditional healing. As you know, the CMS had approved the traditional healing waiver on October 16th, and you all gave us the approval to lead the legislative initiative for traditional healing. Our role will include identifying the sponsor, tracking the bill and providing updates. We'll also be providing support to your tribal leaders at the state legislature when the bill is in motion. AHCCCS also recently received approval by the governor's office last Friday to lead the traditional healing waiver bill. We did get a lot of good feedback from the governor's office and from access on who we potentially should ask and also things to be aware of. So, our legislative initiative is we're going to identify a sponsor, introduce a bill, and then hopefully that it gets to the end of the legislative process, we're also going to run a budget reconciliation bill. The governor's office legislative team had advised us that it's important that we do the bill because running a bill will give us the opportunity to educate and inform state legislators about traditional healing rather than just running a budget reconciliation bill where we're taking a chance that they do. Cindy asked Corey if they were asking for about \$1.2 to \$2 million to support the waiver. Corey indicated it's \$1.32 million.

Right now, we're working on a collaborative document with AHCCCS to really define the roles and responsibilities for traditional healing. Unfortunately, I don't have the bill language to share with you. That's something we're still waiting on from AHCCCS and I'm hoping that that will be sent over at least by the end of today, having that bill language is very important, especially when trying to identify a sponsor. And again, it's been challenging because we can't ask a sponsor to sponsor a bill that doesn't even exist yet.

Corey mentioned that out of the five waivers that they provided us, only one passed this last legislative session. They will likely be reintroducing some of those bills again in 2025. And then a Medicaid expansion is just something that's always just been on our legislative priorities. and as well as oral health with housing, this is a new one that I also put on with the health and housing report that was done through AzHIP grant. There were recommendations there to help improve policies surrounding housing. We have the health and housing opportunities waiver that is upcoming.

Corey indicated that our role again just like the traditional healing waiver is to identify and track legislation and provide updates to the board and stakeholders and inform educate and our partners and provide information on each of these topics. We are going to be creating fact sheets for traditional healing and fraud waste and abuse as well as Medicaid expansion housing and oral health and we will share that with you all.

MOTION:

Dave Dawley moved to approve the legislative priorities as presented.

- ***Traditional Healing***

- *MMIP/Fraud, Waste & Abuse*
- *Medicaid Expansion*
- *Housing*
- *Oral Health*

Deanna Sangster seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Corey then moved on to and outlined the *administrative priorities*.

MOTION:

Dave Dawley made a motion to pass the administrative priorities as laid out by Corey.

- *CHW Medicaid reimbursement*
- *Transportation*
- *Medicaid Expansion*
- *Oral Health*

Gerilene Haskon seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

c. Cindy Lamesh, a longtime advisory board member for CMS, is retiring – there were many sad goodbyes and much appreciation for her years of service to the board. Cindy’s knowledge and passion will be missed.

d. Agency Logo exemption request - Alison reviewed what the AHCCCS is in the process of doing – updating all department logos. Mckayla has heard that this is only for a rebranding of the Exec Cabinets.

MOTION:

Dave Dawley made a motion to write an exemption letter, have the board approve then formally submit for exemption. Deanna Sangster seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

e. Covid 19 Health Disparities Abstract – Alison stated that the HD team grant ends on Dec 31st and we have transferred some of the vital work over to other members of the AACIHC. There was a TPC earlier in the day to confirm these actions. One of the deliverables of the HD Grant was to deliver an abstract regarding the different findings during the course of the 3 year grant. We have written an abstract for the board to review to be certain that the data was presented in a culturally appropriate and sensitive way. Keye has shared the data so far and we will provide a month for the board to review for approval and/or edits before submission.

MOTION:

Gerilene moved that the board receive this document and review for edits/approval.

Dave Dawley seconded this motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda - (Approval of Previously Submitted Reports/Updates emailed out Dec 2nd)
(Action Item)

- Director’s Report – John Molina
- Business/Finance/Tech Support Updates – Alison Lovell

- c. Policy Updates – Corey Hemstreet & McKayla Keams
- d. CCD-CCR Grant – Ashley Lazaro
- e. Health Disparities Grant – Summer Hassan
- f. AIH-AHEC – Jeff Axtell

MOTION:

Dave Dawley motioned to approve the consent agenda, and this was seconded by Verna Johnson and approved unanimously.

Old Business - Consent Agenda - (Approval of Previously Submitted Reports/Updates emailed out on Oct. 10 for the Oct 15th session) (**Action Item**)

- a. Director’s Report – John Molina
- b. Business/Finance/Tech Support Updates – Alison Lovell
- c. Policy Updates – Corey Hemstreet & McKayla Keams
- d. CCDCCR Grant – Ashley Lazaro
- e. Health Disparities Grant – Summer Hassan
- f. AIH-AHEC – Jeff Axtell

MOTION:

Gereline Haskins motioned to approve the previous consent agenda for the Oct Board Meeting, and this was seconded by Verna Johnson and approved unanimously.

Call to the Public – no public at this meeting

Next Meeting Date – Feb 12, 2025

Adjournment – meeting adjourned at 4:13 PM