

Olympic Community of Health (OCH)

Tribal Collaboration and Communication Policy with the

Hoh, Jamestown S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Makah, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Quileute and Suquamish Tribes

I. Purpose

The Olympic Community of Health (OCH) is committed to active engagement with the tribal nations and Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities within our three-county region. All tribes are offered a seat on the Board of Directors. Recognizing that all tribes may not want to be active on the Board, this policy will guide our communications. All tribes/IHS facilities will receive the same level, type, and frequency of communications outlined in this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and concise collaboration policy and communication procedure between the Olympic Community of Health (OCH) and tribal governments in the development of all OCH policies or actions.

II. Governance

The OCH will hold one seat on the Board of Directors for each tribe.

III. Collaboration

The OCH will collaborate and communicate with tribal governments in a manner that respects the tribes’ status as sovereign nations and meets the federal trust responsibility and U.S. treaty obligations to American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs).

- The OCH will not refer to tribes as stakeholders but as partners.
- Because each Tribe has a seat on the Board of Directors, the OCH and Tribes will collaborate from the beginning of and throughout the planning and development process and engage in inclusive decision-making with tribes for all OCH actions, including actions that may have an impact on AI/Ans or tribes (as determined in accordance with Section IV) and not just solicit feedback from tribes.
- The OCH will respect and support the need for Tribal representatives or IHS facility representatives to inform their tribal councils and receive directives from their tribal councils or agency leadership on whether and how the tribe or IHS facility would like to proceed with respect to any OCH action.
- If a tribe declines an invitation to collaborate, the OCH will maintain a standing invitation for the tribe to collaborate with the OCH.

IV. OCH Actions Having Impacts on AI/ANs or Tribes

- **Determining Tribal Impacts.** The OCH will rely on the tribal representatives on the Board of Directors to notify the Board or staff whether an action may have an impact on AI/ANs or Tribes. If authorized by the tribal representatives on the Board, the OCH staff will convene an *ad hoc* Tribal Implications Subcommittee that will include at least one OCH staff member, at least two Tribal OCH Board Members, and one OCH Board member who is not a representative of a tribe. The committee will meet until it determines whether any OCH actions being contemplated, including the development of policies, programs, or agreements, will have an impact on

AI/ANs or Tribes. The OCH lead staff person will ensure that sufficient information about OCH actions is communicated during the meeting, and prior to implementation, to enable the committee to determine whether those actions will have an impact on AI/ANs or Tribes. If no Tribe designates an individual to serve on this committee and until such time when a tribe does designate an individual to serve on this committee, the Board of Directors will make determinations of whether any OCH actions being contemplated will have an impact on AI/ANs or Tribes and inform the tribe(s).

- **Addressing Tribal Impacts.** If the Tribal Implications Subcommittee determines an OCH action has or will have an impact(s) upon a tribe(s) or IHS facility(ies), the Subcommittee will report their findings and any recommendations for addressing those impacts to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will determine a plan of action in response to the Subcommittee's findings and recommendations.

V. Communication

- A. The OCH will dedicate resources to support the function of tribal liaison when resources permit.
- B. The OCH will work with each of the individual tribes to ensure that all contact information is up-to-date and the correct representatives are notified and regularly receive information.
- C. The OCH will provide written information to tribes concurrent with, and in the same format and method as, the delivery of written information to board members for board meetings, to committee members for committee meetings, and to other OCH participants for participant or other meetings. Any tribe that wishes to receive mailed hard copies of meeting materials may do so upon request. The tribal liaison will work with each tribe to develop a specific communication strategy as requested.

VI. Sovereignty and Disclaimer

The OCH respects the sovereignty of each tribe located in the State of Washington and that the tribes have the right to request consultation with the State of Washington and/or the United States government in the event the OCH fails to address the impacts on AI/ANs or Tribes. In executing this policy, no party waives any rights, privileges, or immunities, including treaty rights, sovereign immunities and jurisdiction. This policy does not diminish any rights or protections afforded AI/AN persons or tribal governments or entities under state or federal law. The OCH acknowledges the right of each tribe to consult with state and federal agencies, including, where appropriate, the Health Care Authority, the Governor of the State of Washington, the Region X Administrator of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the President of the United States.

VII. Effective Date

This policy will be effective on _____, and will be reviewed and evaluated annually or at the request of any tribe or a majority of the OCH Board Members.

APPROVED BY:

OCH Board President
Roy Walker

DATE: _____