



CHAPTER 1 – MEDICAID SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW

Section 2: How will Medicaid Transformation Impact Tribes and Urban Indian Health Programs?

Washington State's Regional Support Networks (RSNs), implemented in 1989, were designed to purchase mental health services with Medicaid and non-Medicaid funding. The RSN model was created without adequate engagement of Tribes and UIHPs and resulted in a system that presented significant challenges for Tribes and UIHPs and limited access to care for AI/AN. Tribes and UIHPs have repeatedly identified deficiencies in this model including, but not limited to, access to specialty care, culturally competent care, and recognition of tribal court orders. In 2013, the Washington State Tribal Centric Health Workgroup drafted a Report to the Legislature identifying tribal implications of the Regional Support Networks. Issues identified in this report inform policy analysis by the American Indian Health Commission for Washington State (Commission) regarding Washington State's current transformation activities. Potential implications of transformation activities and policies being discussed include the following:

1. Expansion of Medicaid managed care may cause further degradation of the Medicaid fee-for-service reimbursement system if Washington fails to preserve and enhance access to specialty care in the fee-for-service system.
2. Washington State's selection and implementation of performance measures and data collection methodologies for monitoring health outcomes and providing incentive payments to providers may create additional demands for Tribes and UIHPs.
3. If Medicaid Transformation is implemented with the existing AI/AN data infrastructure, it will result in a lack of care coordination and an inability to accurately assess population health for AI/AN. It is critical to improve the tribal and UIHP data capabilities to increase population health management and exchange information with the State, non-tribal entities, and non-Indian healthcare providers.
4. If Washington State health transformation initiatives and Medicaid Transformation Waiver projects are developed and implemented without the proper engagement of Tribes and UIHPs, they will not effectively produce improved health outcomes for AI/AN. In fact, they could produce costly unintended consequences.

“a Managed Care system without a requirement to acknowledge and constructively work with Tribal Governments cannot adequately respond to, and appropriately serve, American Indians and/or Alaska Natives.”

Tribal Centric Behavioral Health Report to the Legislature, 2013, p. 5.