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January 18, 2024

RE: Announcing the Executive Director of Washington State Department of Health's NEW Office of Tribal Public Health and Relations

Greetings Honorable Tribal Leaders, Urban Indian Health Organization, Recognized American Indian Organization, Public Health Officials, and Indian Country Professional,

It is my great pleasure to share the news that we have selected Candice Wilson - Quatz'tenaut (Lummi) through a competitive recruitment to serve as the first Executive Director of the Washington State Department of Health's (DOH) Office of Tribal Public Health and Relations (OTPHR). She started in her role on January 2, 2024.

Through Executive Director Wilson's vision in the development of the OTPHR and in reflection of our agency's value of *Seventh Generation Principle*, her unwavering commitment to honor the legacy and wisdom of those who came before us to ensure our current work protects those who will come after us for generations to come, makes her a natural fit for this key leadership position at DOH.

She will undoubtedly lead OTPHR with passion, grace, and in concert with our agency's commitment to our government-to-government relationship with Tribes. As a former tribal leader, school board director and community servant, she is well versed in serving tribal & public communities to improve health for all.

We created OTPHR to reflect our steadfast commitment to honoring the sovereignty of tribal nations in all the work we do. The OTPHR, under Executive Director Wilson's leadership, will strengthen and enhance our collaboration with sovereign tribal nations, tribal health directors, and tribal organizations in the development of policies, practices, initiatives, and decisions.

The OTPHR affirms not only our commitment to advancing tribal public health, but also the investments necessary to support tribal relations at our agency. The OTPHR will coordinate related activities across DOH while also focusing its attention on key areas such as policy, partnerships, communications, and data.

Thank you to those who were able to join the listening session we held last summer with tribes and tribal organizations to offer input and priority areas of focus as we launched the OTPHR. The comments we received will help shape OTPHR's focus and priorities and look for ongoing opportunities to continue to shape OTPHR's work as we move forward.

If you have any questions about OTPHR, or on any tribal health-related matter, please do not hesitate to reach out to Executive Director Wilson at Candice.Wilson@doh.wa.gov or 360.819.7626.

Let me close by wishing you only the very best of health and wellness as we embark on a new year – Happy New Year and please join me in welcoming Candice to her new role!

Best,



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