



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Prevention and Community Health
Post Office Box 47830
Olympia, Washington 98504-7830
711 Washington Relay Service

July 7, 2023

SUBJECT: Request Legislation for State Issued Standing Orders

Greetings Honorable Tribal Leaders and Tribal Partners,

I am writing today to provide information and invite input about a proposal for request legislation. This proposal would give the Department of Health (DOH) authority to issue standing orders.

In the next legislative session, DOH plans to put forward a bill to give state law authority to the Secretary of Health to issue standing orders. Standing orders are written protocols approved by a physician or other approved provider. Standing orders support public health efforts and improve access to health care services.

During the COVID-19 response, the Secretary issued standing orders for COVID-19 vaccines, COVID-19 testing, flu vaccines, and epinephrine auto-injectors. This occurred under the federal Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP) combined with a declared public health emergency. With the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Secretary no longer has clear authority to issue these standing orders and they have been rescinded.

Currently the only state law that expressly permits the Secretary or a designee to issue standing orders is specific to opioid overdose reversal medications such as naloxone. If the Secretary had clear authority to issue standing orders without prior federal authorization, the DOH could take action to address emerging public health concerns more quickly and routine concerns more comprehensively. Examples could include routine and outbreak-specific immunizations, epinephrine auto-injectors in schools and long-term care facilities, point of care testing for COVID-19 or blood lead levels, and smoking cessation treatments.

Your feedback on this proposal would help make future instances of DOH standing orders useful for our tribal partners. We will provide more information for the **Request Legislation for State Issued Standing Orders** at the [Monthly Tribal Meeting](#) on July 12th at 1:00 PM. I hope that you or a member of your staff can attend.

For more information or to provide comments please contact Senior Policy Analyst Meghan Cichy at 564-669-3834 or Meghan.Cichy@doh.wa.gov. For tribal related matters please contact Tribal Policy Director Candice Wilson at 360-819-7626 or Candice.Wilson@doh.wa.gov.

I appreciate your feedback on how to best work with your nation, community, and people. I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michele R Roberts".

Michele Roberts, MPH, MCHES
Assistant Secretary, Division of Prevention and Community Health (PCH)
Washington State Department of Health

Cc: Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH - Secretary of Health - Department of Health
Candice Wilson Quatz'tenaut (Lummi) - Tribal Policy Director - Department of Health
Kristopher Holiday - Chief of Strategic Partnerships - Department of Health
Elizabeth Perez - Chief of Public Affairs and Equity - Department of Health
Kristin Peterson - Chief of Policy, Planning and Evaluation - Department of Health
Jessica Todorovich - Chief of Staff - Department of Health
Lacy Fehrenbach - Chief of Prevention, Safety and Health - Department of Health
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Colleen Thompson - Policy and Legislative Relations Director – Department of Health
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