



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PO Box 47890 | Olympia, Washington 98504-7890
360-236-4030 | 711 Washington State Relay

June 9, 2025

Re: Informative- Opportunity to Participate with the Washington Syndemic Planning Group

Greetings Honorable Tribal Leaders, Partners, and Professionals:

In accordance with chapter [43.376 RCW](#), the [Washington State Centennial Accord of 1989](#), and [DOH Consultation and Collaboration Procedure](#), we are providing information on the [Washington Syndemic Planning Group \(WSPG\)](#), a collaborative, cross-sector group co-led by the Washington State Department of Health and community stakeholders.

WSPG is responsible for guiding the development, implementation, and monitoring of the [Integrated HIV Care and Prevention Plan](#), while also integrating strategies to address co-occurring conditions such as STIs, viral hepatitis, substance use, and mental health challenges.

Why Your Participation Matters:

- Amplifying Tribal Voices: Your engagement ensures that WSPG strategies and decisions are culturally grounded and reflect the unique health priorities of tribal communities.
- Bringing a Syndemic Lenses: Your insights help us understand how health, culture, environment, and community are deeply interconnected.
- Building Stronger Partnerships: Joining a network of state, local, and community leaders committed to advancing systems-level equity and improving community health outcomes through collaboration.

What to Expect-Members of the Washington Syndemic Planning Group:

- Attend one virtual meeting every two months to participate in collective decision-making.
- Engage or contribute to subcommittees or working groups focused on specific priority areas.
- Co-develop strategies and recommendations for the Integrated HIV Plan and broader syndemic approaches.

For additional information, please contact Starleen Maharaj-Lewis, Syndemic Planning Coordinator, Office of Infectious Disease, Disease Control and Health Statistics at Starleen.Maharaj-Lewis@doh.wa.gov or 360-764-3913, or contact Candice Wilson, Executive Director, Office of Tribal Public Health and Relations (OTPHR), at candice.wilson@doh.wa.gov or 360-819-7626.

Respectfully,

Angi Miller
Acting Assistant Secretary
Disease Control and Health Statistics

cc: Jessica Todorovich, Interim Secretary of Health, WA-DOH
Atousa Salehi M.D., Chief Science Officer, WA-DOH
Wendy Endress, Acting Chief of Staff, WA-DOH
Kristin Peterson, Chief, Office of Policy, Planning & Evaluation, WA-DOH
Candice Wilson-Quatz'tenaut (Lummi), Executive Director, OTPHR, WA-DOH



May 16, 2025

Engage with the Washington Syndemic Planning Group (WSPG)

What is the [WSPG](#)?

A community advisory body launched in July 2022 that advises the Washington State Department of Health's Office of Infectious Disease (OID) on strategies to combat HIV, viral hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) through an anti-racist, syndemic approach.

Why Engage?

- Influence statewide prevention, care, treatment, and harm-reduction strategies.
- Elevate health equity and racial justice in policy and funding decisions.
- Collaborate on person-centered, evidence-based models of care.

WSPG Representation

- People with Lived Experience
- Peer navigators, CHWs, and advocates rooted in communities most affected by syndemics
- Health care providers, HIV/STI/HCV clinicians, prescribers of PrEP/PEP, MOUD providers
- Community-Based Organizations
- Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJs)
- Systems-Level & Policy Experts

Opportunities to Engage

- **Apply for Membership:** Individuals with lived experience or professional expertise in HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs, or drug user health are encouraged to apply.
- **Join Community Caucuses:** Participate in targeted listening sessions (e.g., mental health, drug use, long-term survivors) to share community-specific recommendations.
- **Serve on Committees:** Contribute to Innovation Committees, Steering Committee, or special task forces focusing on syndemic frameworks and multisector solutions.
- **Review and Comment on Materials:** Provide feedback on the WSPG Charter & Bylaws, annual reports, and meeting minutes via the WSPG webpage.
- **Attend General Meetings:** WSPG holds open general meetings every two months. These meetings are open to

the public, providing a space for observation, dialogue, and feedback on key syndemic priorities.

Learn More and Get Involved

1. [Visit the WSPG Webpage](#)
2. Download Key Documents:
 - a. [2025 Charter & Bylaws](#)
 - b. [Read more about the Syndemic Planning Group's work on the HIV Integrated Care and Prevention Plan 2022-2026](#)
3. Submit an Application: Complete the online form by contacting the WSPG coordinator directly (starleen.maharaj-lewis@doh.wa.gov).
4. Attend Public Meetings: Check the WSPG site for upcoming meeting dates, agendas, and virtual participation links.

Program contact info

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