



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Health and Recovery Services Administration, P.O. Box 45502, Olympia, Washington 98504-5502

May 21, 2009

Dear Tribal Leaders:

We notified a broad range of HRSA stakeholders last week that we are planning some internal reorganization by June 1, 2009. I also want to respond specifically to what I think may be tribal concerns in the wake of that announcement:

First, I want to reassure you that these are not a budget-cut exercise. The administration is undergoing severe cutbacks in some areas under the new biennial budget, and the reorganization reflects our attempts to deal with those changes by being more efficient and effective. But some have raised questions about whether the reorganization might actually represent preparations for further cuts. While none of us know exactly what the future holds, these changes were not intended to preface some pending cuts down the road.

Second, I want to stress that we are taking a hard look at how we have conducted business in the past, especially in the area of mental health services. The Governor made it clear to us when she announced her health policy priorities that we should manage the budget crisis to the advantage of stakeholders, consumers and quality services. I want to be sure that we make the improvements that we can.

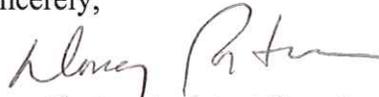
Third, the reorganization we announced is an internal realignment. We do not expect it to have a negative impact on the services available to our customers and clients or to change your relationship with HRSA. But one thing that we have specifically assigned to the reorganization workgroup is to make sure that we continue down the path of integration, centering services on our clients, not on the delivery system. This is another step along the path to integration and realignment that we began four years ago. In addition, we are already seeing longer wait times in the Medical Assistance Customer Service Center's phone bank, for example. It is only logical that other HRSA services and functions may be affected by reductions in staffing.

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So we will be very interested in your feedback and your assistance as we take these steps. We do not intend to remove points of contact here, but some business practices may well require change. Again, our intention is to keep you informed as this new phase at HRSA moves ahead. Please stay in touch and let us know how it affects you as well.

Finally, I want to cite the signing ceremonies at the Port Gamble S'Klallam Reservation earlier this week. This is a milestone for both Washington State and the 29 recognized tribes in the state. We very much want to pursue additional success stories.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Porter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Doug Porter, Assistant Secretary
Health & Recovery Services Administration