

Managed Care Plan Tribal Liaison Role: *Lunch and Learn*

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in partnership
with



Our Feathers Soaring Higher

Session Presenters



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HC2 Strategies



We respectfully acknowledge the 110 California Native American tribes and 80 unrecognized, all sovereign. We pay homage to them in this Collaborative, an important step toward healing the past and co-creating the future through continued partnerships to improve our communities' health and well-being.



Agenda

- Welcome
- AI/AN Communities and Culturally Responsive Engagement
- APL-24-002: MCP Tribal Liaison Role
- CalAIM Overview
- Traditional Healer and Natural Helper Services
- Discussion/Questions
- Wrap Up



At the end of this session:

Learning Objectives:

- Clarify Tribal Liaison responsibilities
- Define role within CalAIM implementation

California Tribal and Urban Indian Landscape

- 109 federally recognized tribes in California
- 62 unrecognized tribes
- 9 Urban Indian Organizations
- Geographic diversity and rural access challenges





American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Communities and Culturally Responsive Engagement

- Historical trauma
- Unique healthcare practices for American Indian Alaska Native communities
- Current urban and rural perspectives

For more information:

DHCS Office of Tribal Affairs

Governor Gavin Newsom Office of Tribal Affairs

Sovereign Nations: [California Tribal Directory](#)

Historical Trauma

- Forced assimilation through boarding schools → Ongoing mistrust of healthcare
- Violent colonization and displacement → Intergenerational health inequities
- Chronic underfunding of the Indian Health Service (IHS) → Persistent poor health outcomes
- Intergenerational impacts of abuse in boarding schools → Worsened mental health and trauma symptoms
- Racism in healthcare systems → Lower utilization of mental health services



Unique Healthcare Practices for AI/AN Communities

- **Traditional healing methods** such as herbal medicine, spiritual healing, drumming, storytelling, and balance-centered wellness approaches
- **Tribal doctors and traditional healers** provide culturally rooted care including healing hands (massage), plant medicine, cleansing rituals, and prayer
- **Cultural wellness practices** such as talking circles, smudging, and sweat lodges that support emotional, spiritual, and behavioral health
- **Traditional foods and seasonal activities** (e.g., gathering, hunting, intergenerational cultural teachings) that promote nutrition, wellness, and community resilience



Current Urban and Rural Perspectives

- The United States has a legal and moral obligation to provide healthcare to American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. This responsibility stems from treaties in which Tribal Nations ceded land in exchange for protections including health services
- Indian Health Services (IHS), Tribal, and Urban Indian health programs form the Indian Healthcare Delivery System
- Tribes increasingly exercise self-determination in healthcare delivery
- Persistent challenges remain, including underfunding, workforce shortages, and health disparities



Why Tribal Engagement Matters



- Unique government-to-government relationship
- Tribal sovereignty
- Importance of culturally appropriate healthcare
- Historical context affecting trust and access
- Health disparities impacting Tribal communities

Medi-Cal and Tribal and Urban Indian Communities

- Medi-Cal coverage among American Indian / Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations
- Role of managed care plans
- Coordination with Tribal health providers
- Federal protections for Tribal members



All Plan Letter 24-002: MCP Tribal Liaison

- As outlined in the MCP contract and [All Plan Letter \(APL\) 24-002](#), MCPs were required to have an identified tribal liaison by January 1, 2024, to work with contracted and non-contracted Indian Health Care Providers (IHCPs) in its service area
- The tribal liaison should have experience with tribal health care, American Indian tribes, and managed care to assist IHCPs with the requirements and policies
 - MCPs are expected to fulfill the role with adequate staffing to ensure their ability to serve IHCPs, American Indian MCP members, and the MCP's service area

What is an MCP Tribal Liaison?

- Designated point of contact between:
 - Managed care plan (MCP)
 - Tribal and Urban Indian health programs
- Supports communication, coordination, and relationship building
- Ensures Tribal and Urban Indian considerations are incorporated into MCP operations



MCP Tribal Liaison Role and Responsibilities

- The roles and responsibilities the liaisons are expected to assist IHCPs with include, but are not limited to:
 - Providing information pertaining to enrollment and disenrollment
 - Coordinating care and ensuring access to in- and out-of-network IHCPs
 - Providing assistance with accessing transportation
 - Providing case management
 - Assisting with provider relations, services claims, payment assistance and resolution, referral coordination, and member services.

MCP Tribal Liaison Role and Responsibilities, Continued

- Providing support in obtaining grievance, appeal, and State Hearing services
- Providing benefit and service navigation and coordination
- Providing assistance regarding Medi-Cal program provider enrollment and MCP contracting, credentialing, and Facility Site Reviews

MCP Tribal Liaison Workgroup Priorities

1. Build shared understanding of the MCP tribal liaison role and promote best practice exchange
2. Advance partnerships between managed care plans (MCPs) and Indian Health Care Programs (IHCPs)
3. Promote culturally responsive engagement and system navigation for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) members
4. Support coordination and integration of care across tribal, urban, and non-tribal health systems.
5. Align with the Indian Health PATH Collaborative Planning and Implementation Priorities
6. Provide insight into current challenges, experiences, and opportunities for improvement

MCP Tribal Liaison Workgroup Alignment with APL-24-002

- Collaborating with other MCP tribal liaisons to share best practices, lessons learned, information, and resources
- Collaborating with local tribal communities on the development of regional and culturally appropriate trainings for MCP staff
- Having knowledge and consideration of Indigenous Determinants of Health when determining quality metrics and data reporting.



How Can Counties Support AI/AN Members?

- Identify county contacts to connect with the tribal liaison and/or the Urban Indian Health Center in areas such as behavioral health, child welfare, and transportation to support care coordination, access, and cross-program navigation
- Join shared training on tribal engagement and cultural humility
- Support timely information-sharing to improve coordination
- Include tribal liaison input in county planning and outreach



Gavin Newsom visit to Friendship House Association of American Indians (City & County of San Francisco) on 1/16/2026



California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM)

What is CalAIM?

- California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal
- Multi-year transformation of Medi-Cal
- Focus areas:
 - Whole-person care
 - Social drivers of health
 - Population health management
 - Health equity



Why CalAIM Matters for Tribal Communities

- Opportunity to improve access to services
- Enhanced care coordination
- Addressing social drivers of health
- Increased collaboration between MCPs and Tribal and Urban Indian Health providers



Tribal Liaison Role Within CalAIM

- Supporting Tribal and Urban Indian Health provider engagement in CalAIM initiatives
 - *(i.e., contracting, implementation of Enhanced care management (ECM) and Community Supports)*
- Helping Tribal and Urban Indian Health providers understand new programs and benefits
- Ensuring Tribal and Urban Indian Health perspectives inform implementation
- Facilitating collaboration with community-based organizations

Upcoming Event: Indian Health PATH Collaborative Meeting

Friday, March 27, 2026
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. PST

[REGISTER HERE](#)





Traditional Healers & Natural Helpers

Traditional Healers and Natural Helpers



Visit the [DHCS Traditional Health Care Practices](#) website for resources and contacts.

1. [Current program information](#) with agenda and FAQs (coming soon)
2. Future Information Sessions [events page](#).
3. [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#)
4. Send questions and TA requests to TraditionalHealing@dhcs.ca.gov

Contacts:

DHCS:

- Policy questions: TraditionalHealing@dhcs.ca.gov
- Billing/claiming questions: MEDCCC@dhcs.ca.gov

Technical Assistance:

- California Consortium for Urban Indian Health (CCUIH)
- California Rural Indian Health Board (CRIHB)
- Kauffman and Associates (KAI)



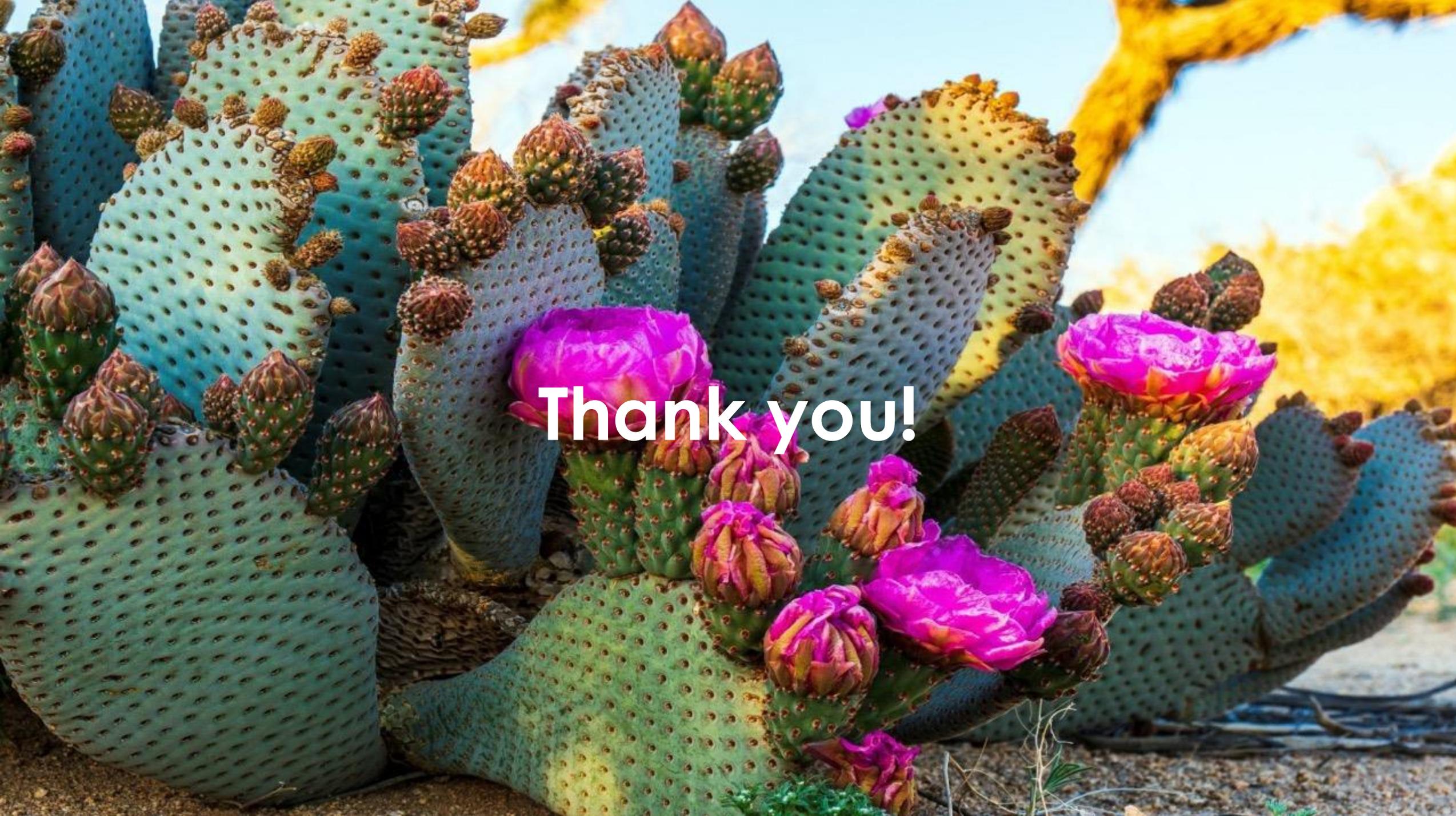
Discussion



- Has your county been engaged with Traditional Healers and Natural Helper practices?
- What has been your experience in working with these services?

Questions?





Thank you!