



# Communicating with Policymakers

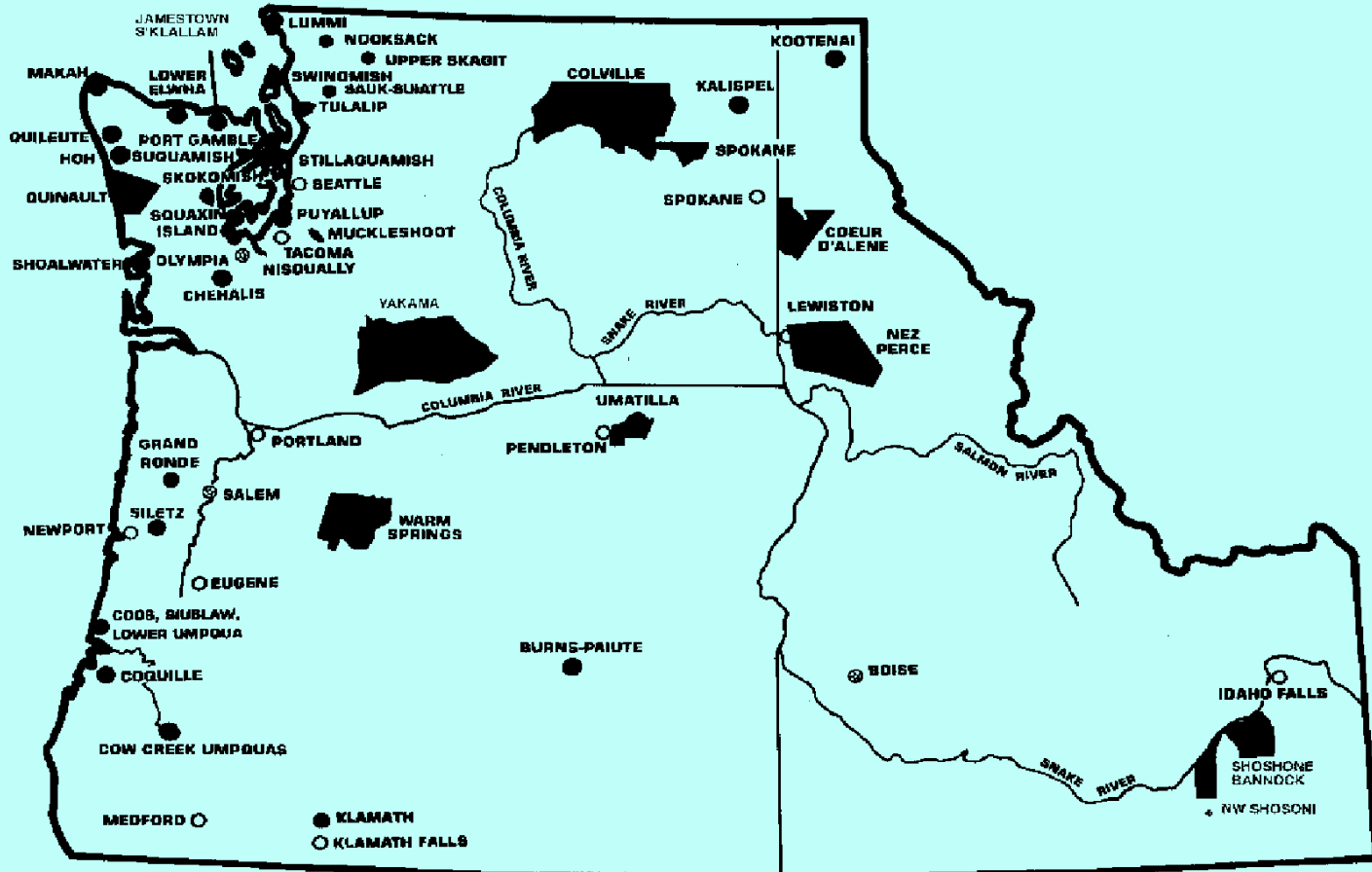
Joe Finkbonner RPh MHA,  
Executive Director

Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board



# NPIHB Mission

*To assist Northwest Tribes to improve the health status and quality of life of member tribes and Indian people in their delivery of culturally appropriate and holistic health care*





# Who am I?

- Citizen of the Lummi Nation
- Education University of Washington
  - Pharmacy Degree
  - Masters in Health Administration
- Hospital Pharmacist
- Worked for Health Information System
- Health Director/General Manager (Lummi)
- EpiCenter Dir./ Executive Dir. (NPAIHB)



# Who is NPAIH?

- Est. 1972
- Reps from SUDs, eventually one tribe, one vote (43 delegates)
- HP/DP programs
- Tribal EpiCenter
- Training/Technical Assistance
- Advocacy



# The basics of talking with Council

- Suggest something useful/important
- Know what you are asking/suggesting
- Brevity
- Ask the right person
- Thank you!
- Give them a handout/information
- If email – short, short, short



# Something useful

- Make it natural, don't force a compliment.
- Council members want to know they are making a difference.
- Shows you are interested



# Know what you are asking

- Be prepared
- Be clear
- Upfront
- Polite
- State the importance of the decision



# Brevity

- Avoid jargon
- Elevator principle
- Email – limit it to 2-4 paragraphs. They may receive hundreds of emails per day.





# Ask the right person

- Make sure this is an area of interest for the council member and within their assigned areas
- Council members are assigned to different committees such as health, education, culture, etc.



# Thank you!

- Most council members receive quite a bit of negative feedback from constituents.
- If you want to work with them...always respect their time and conversation, even if they don't agree with you on this issue



# Leave a handout

- This should have a bit more information, can be a single page.
- Include your contact information...don't assume they know how to reach you.



# What is the scope of decision?

- Is this a policy just for your tribe or could it have regional or national implications?



# Advancement of policy

- Tribal policy
- NPAIHB
- ATNI
- NCAI/NIHB
- Forward to Departments of jurisdiction as well as congressional representatives.

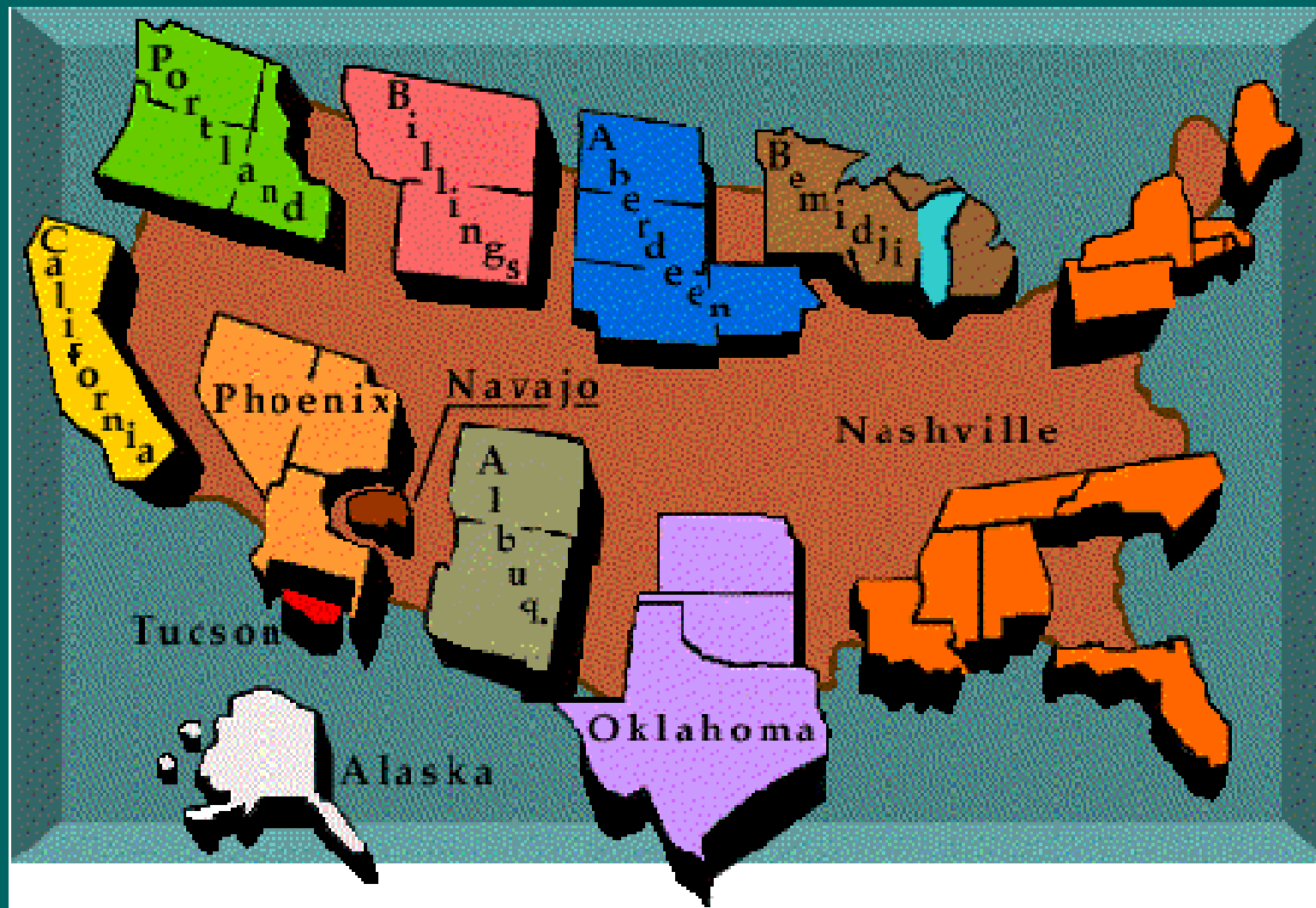


# The Indian Health Delivery System

- IHS established in 1955
- Divided into 12 administrative “Areas”
  - Portland Area Office (ID, OR, WA)
  - Portland Area has 43 tribes
- IHS is responsible for overseeing health care for 573 federally recognized tribes
- 1,139 health facilities located in 34 states
  - 49 hospitals, 545 health clinics, 231 ambulatory facilities, 133 health stations, 176 Alaska Native village clinics
  - 34 Urban Indian Health programs



# Indian Health Service Administrative Areas





# Indian Health Delivery System

- Health Facilities can be grouped into 3 categories:
  1. IHS Directly Operated
  2. Tribally Operated
  3. Urban Programs (34)
- Types of Health Services
  - Ambulatory Primary Care (outpatient care)
  - Inpatient care
  - Medical specialties
  - Traditional healing practices
  - Dental and Vision Care
  - Behavioral health services
  - Specialty Care Services (CHS)





# Challenges

- Chronic Under-funding of the Indian Health Service Budget
- Growing population – “Eligibility Issues”
- Significant health disparities
- Increased importance of State Health Policy Decisions (Health Exchanges)



# Challenges

- Policy shift by Congress and Administration not to provide health funding
  - Abrogation of federal trust relationship
  - Subjecting Tribes to grants vs. appropriations
  - Discretionary vs. entitlement funding issues
- Civil Rights issues associated with federal trust relationship
- Misconception of gaming & Tribes getting “rich”
- Misconception that health and dental are “free”



# Contact information

Joe Finkbonner RPh MHA,  
Executive Director

NW Portland Area Indian Health Board

2121 SW Broadway, Suite 300

Portland, OR 97201

Phone: 503.228.4185

Fax: 503.228.8182

[Jfinkbonner@npaihb.org](mailto:Jfinkbonner@npaihb.org)