

## Regional Update from HHS Regional Director Susan Johnson Region 10 - Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington



Dear Colleagues:

May 2012

I want to congratulate the state of Oregon on the recently announced partnership with HHS to implement Oregon's transformational health reform. Oregon's new coordinated care organizations are expected to deliver the triple aim of improved health, improved health care, and lower costs for Medicaid clients. Oregon estimates that this will save \$11 billion in state and federal Medicaid spending over the next decade. Congratulations to everyone who worked so long to turn this extraordinary vision into a reality.

Last month, while in Alaska, I had the pleasure of visiting the Kenai Peninsula to see first hand some of the health and human service delivery systems. Along with staff from U.S. Senator Mark Begich's office, I toured the Peninsula Community Health Services' Cottonwood Health Center, and the Central Peninsula General Hospital. I also met with members of the Kenaizte Tribe and heard incredible stories reflecting the history of the Tribe's work to provide health and human service programs for their members. The Kenaizte Tribe, in partnership with IHS, is participating in a joint venture to build a new wellness center. Ground breaking is anticipated this year. Congratulations to all!

Sincerely,  
Susan



With members of the Kenaizte Indian Tribe Executive Council, including Executive Director Jaylene Peterson Nyren (5th from L) and Tribal Chair Rosalie Tepp (2nd from R), and Dena'ina Health Clinic staff.



Save the Date

### Surgeon General Coming to Seattle

HHS, in partnership with state and local public health authorities and tobacco prevention professionals throughout the Pacific Northwest, will hold a **Youth and Tobacco Town Hall Meeting** on the Seattle campus of the University of Washington (Kane Hall) on Thursday, June 14, 2012. Click [here](#) for more information.



## Recent HHS Announcements

### Region 10 States Receive Funds for Community Health Centers

HHS recently announced funds totaling more than \$728 million across the United States that will support renovation and construction projects for community health centers, boosting health centers' ability to care for additional patients and creating jobs. The awards are part of a series of capital investments that are made available to community health centers through the Affordable Care Act, which will provide \$9.5 billion to expand services over five years and \$1.5 billion to support major construction and renovation projects at community health centers.

The announcement was for awards from two capital programs for community health centers. One will provide approximately \$629 million to 171 existing health centers across the country for longer-term projects to expand their facilities, improve existing services, and serve more patients. This program will expand access to an additional 860,000 patients. The second set of awards will provide approximately \$99.3 million to 227 existing health centers to address pressing facility and equipment needs.

Health centers in all Region X states received funds: Alaska - \$3,886,731; Idaho - \$9,642,221; Oregon - \$6,996,830; Washington - \$19,195,097.

A List of Capital Development – Building Capacity Program awards by State can be found [here](#).

A List of Capital Development – Immediate Facility Improvement Program awards by State can be found [here](#).

### HHS Announces First 26 Health Care Innovation Awards

Kitsap Mental Health Services in Washington and Finity Communications, Inc. in Oregon were in the first batch of organizations to receive Health Care Innovation awards.

The awards will support 26 innovative projects nationwide that will save money, deliver high quality medical care and enhance the health care workforce. These preliminary awardees expect to reduce health spending by \$254 million over the next 3 years.

The 26 projects include collaborations of leading hospitals, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, technology innovators, community-based organizations, and patients' advocacy groups, among others, located in urban and rural areas that will begin work this year to address health care issues in local communities. This initiative allows applicants to come up with their best ideas to test how we can quickly and efficiently improve the quality and affordability of health care.

Kitsap Mental Health Services received \$1.9 million to improve health and reduce avoidable emergency room visits and hospitalizations. Finity Communications, Inc.'s nearly \$5 million award will use health information technology to engage patients residing in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area in their own care, emphasizing prevention and wellness.

Please visit the [CMS website](#) for more information on the awards.

### Oregon and Washington Receive Additional Insurance Exchange Grants

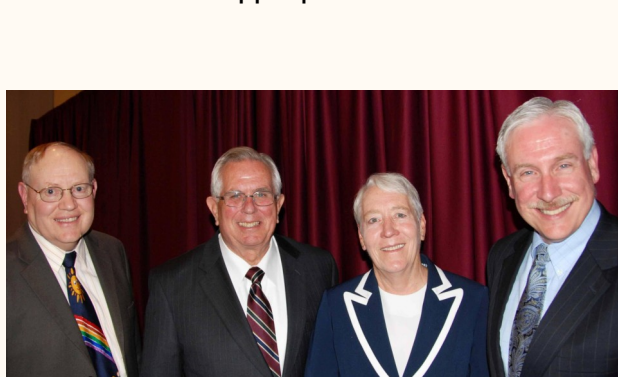
HHS recently announced that six states, including Oregon and Washington, will receive more than \$181 million in grants to help implement the new health care law. Illinois, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, and Tennessee were awarded Level One Exchange Establishment grants, which provide one year of funding to states that have begun the process of building their Exchange. Oregon was awarded \$6.7 million. Washington was the second state to be awarded a Level Two Establishment grant, which is provided to states that are further along in building their Exchange and offers funding over multiple years. Washington was awarded \$127.9 million.

States can apply for Exchange grants through the end of 2014, and these funds are available for states to use beyond 2014 as they continue to establish Exchange functionality. This ensures that states have the support and time necessary to build the best Exchange for their residents. To see a detailed state-by-state breakdown of grant awards and what each state plans to do with its Exchange funding, visit the [new map tool on HealthCare.gov](#).

## Region 10 Spotlight: Idaho

**Idaho is on track to open its suicide prevention hotline by the end of this year.** Idaho is currently the only state without a suicide prevention hotline, and in March, state lawmakers approved \$110,000 for the hotline. Total funding for the project will come from state and private partnerships. Though Idahoans have access to national suicide prevention hotlines, this state-based hotline will allow local counselors, after receiving a call from an individual, to coordinate with other local resources to ensure appropriate care. You can read more [here](#).

**In April, I participated in a robust panel discussion in Idaho** on the Affordable Care Act and what it means for health care and public health in Idaho. The event was hosted by the Idaho Public Health Association and the Department of Community and Environmental Health at Boise State University. On the panel, I was joined by Dr.



L to R: Jim Girvan (moderator), Director Bill Deal, Susan, and Dr. David C. Pate.

David C. Pate, President and CEO of St. Luke's Health System and Bill Deal, Director of the Idaho Department of Insurance. A video of the panel discussion is available [here](#).

**The Idaho Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) State Leadership Conference was recently held** in Meridian, ID. The 650 students in attendance had worked all year to be ready to compete at the state conference in events such as pharmacology, medical math, and dental terminology. I spoke at the awards ceremony, and it was exciting to see so much energy and enthusiasm from our future health care workforce!

For HHS funding resources, please visit the [HHS Grants/Funding site](#) or [FYI: Minority Resources...Money & More](#), a newsletter published by the Office of Minority Health Resource Center.

CDC Tribal Funding Opportunities:  
[BioSense 2.0: Building State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Surveillance Capacity to Enhance Regional and National All-Hazards Public Health Situation Awareness Grant](#)

[Building Resilience Against Climate Effects in State, Territorial and Tribal Health Departments Grant](#)

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Questions or comments? Please contact me at [susan.johnson@hhs.gov](mailto:susan.johnson@hhs.gov) or 206-615-2010.