

Working to get west end health offices opened



**DENISE CHASE, DIRECTOR,
UNIT IV**

An ongoing issue for our unit has been the closing of the Escanaba Tribal Health Center and the Marquette office. They were both closed down in 2008. There was no financial reason for those centers to be closed down.

Since Chairman Payment took office, I have been consistently pushing this issue forward. Directors Morrow and Carr-Anderson have also voiced their support to re-establish those services. Director Morrow, myself and Chairman Payment met with Bonnie Culfa, health director, and Marlene Glaesmann, rural health director, and had discussion on this issue. Myself and Darcy were already working on a resolution to support this.

After our meeting, myself, Director Morrow and Chairman Payment presented a resolution to set up a committee to work on putting back in place the services that were cut in 2008. Following is the exact resolution passed and the individuals appointed to the ad hoc health access exploratory group:

“Establish Ad Hoc Health Access Exploratory Group
“WHEREAS, health access for Tribal Members is of critical

importance and has been consistently rated as one of the top three priorities for the Tribe; and

“WHEREAS, the health division team has been phenomenally successful in virtually eliminating the need for “tribal support” revenues by accessing grants and increasing “third party” revenues, thereby demonstrating the self-sufficiency of operations; and

“WHEREAS, the United States Affordable Care Act of 2010, provides many new opportunities for Tribes to expand health access through innovative and entrepreneurial efforts.

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors hereby directs the creation of an Adhoc Health Access Exploratory Group to analyze, determine feasibility, and recommend opportunities for health access revitalization and/or expansion in the geographic areas of: Escanaba, Marquette, Kinross, DeTour, and after hour clinic access in partnerships in St. Ignace, Marquette, and additional areas to be identified.

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following individuals from the Tribe’s governing board are hereby appointed to the Adhoc Health Access Exploratory Group:

“Tribal Chairperson: Aaron A. Payment

“Unit 1: Cathy Abramson

“Unit 1: Debra Pine

“Unit 2:

“Unit 3:

“Unit 4: Denise Chase

“Unit 5: Joan Carr-Anderson

“...and the following health division team members are also appointed: Bonnie Culfa, Health Division Director; Rebecca Werner MD, Medical Director; Krysta Hinman OD, Director of Optemtry; Tony Abramson, STHC Clinic Manager; Marlene

Glaesmann, Rural Health Clinic Manager; Bruce Anderson, DDS; and Jackie McLean, Health Care Administrator/Business Office Manager; Joel Lumsden, Operations Manager; and Dan Frye, Health Division Data Analyst.

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Adhoc Health Access Exploratory Group is hereby directed to report back to the Tribal Board of Directors preliminary findings by April 30, 2013 and with final recommendations made by May 30, 2013.

“BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Adhoc Health Access Exploratory Group shall also evaluate and bring back a recommendation for the creation of an autonomous Tribally Designated Health Entity patterned after the Tribal Housing Commission.”

Another resolution that myself, Director Morrow and Chairman Payment brought forward was to hire an outside independent efficiency auditor. I feel this will be a great tool for the tribe, to receive a list of recommendations for improving efficiencies in our organization. In fact, it would have been valuable to have this done prior to the 2008 cuts.

Following is the resolution that was passed. We will update you in the future of the finding and recommendations:

“Efficiency Auditor

“WHEREAS, the Sault Ste. Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors have a responsibility to the Membership to run an efficient and profitable operation to provide services.

“NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors authorizes Chairperson Aaron A. Payment, William Connelly, CFO, Angeline Boulley, Asst. Membership/

Internal Services Executive Director, & John Wernet, General Counsel to hire an outside independent Efficiency Auditor with experience working with casinos, enterprises, and all subordinate governmental programs, services and operations.

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the above said efficiency auditor will provide the Sault Tribe Board of Directors with a list of recommendations for improving efficiencies.

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors shall review and act on the list of identified recommendations for improving efficiencies.”

Fall 2 percent applications:

Director Morrow and myself reviewed the fall 2 percent short term applications and selected a variety of projects throughout our unit. Unfortunately we had only \$68,061 to distribute.

Some of the projects approved were substance abuse prevention and education, Christmas giving baskets program, hospital equipment, welcome newborn programs, Title VII public schools programs, cultural awareness programs, tutoring programs, cultural enhancement presentations, field trips/school supplies, feast meals/guest speakers, school community garden, teaching mini powwows, community meeting space, tutoring and activity space, college days/career planning, after school tutoring lab, senior class honor ceremony, honorariums for community teachers/elders and regalia/students.

Our unit has always supported the schools Title VII project 2 percent applications.

I know each of the Title VII school coordinators in our unit do a great job with the students. I hear a lot of good feedback from parents and the youth on the vari-

ous cultural and education programs they provide.

The board will be reviewing the long term 2 percent, we had discussion at the recent workshop on this issue. There are some long term 2 percent commitments expiring and its time for a discussion on how to fairly divide the long term 2 percent funds among the five units, so we all get a fair slice of the pie. We can do a lot more with the long term funding being fairly divided among the units. It would be good to be able to fund more projects or be able to do increases to some of the school programs, if funding permits. I look forward to this discussion in the near future and will update you on the results.

As you all know, we are moving forward with the Lansing casino project. The revenue generated by the Lansing casino will be used to increase direct services to our members and improve health access, health care, education benefits, allow us to put back in services and programs that were cut or reduced in '08, like elders' checks, funeral assistance, youth sports sponsorship, \$50 Christmas gift card to elders, \$50 Christmas gift card to employees, etc.

We received a report from the Enrollment Department this year. In 2012, we will have 4,442 elders eligible for an elder's check and the numbers are growing each year. Over the next 15 years, our elders population will triple; by 2027 tribal elders 60 and over will be around 12,345. That's why it's so important that our revenue making projects be the board's top priority like the Lansing casino.

Thank you, have a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,
Denise Chase, Vice Chair,
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