

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 10/22/2018

Lisa Rey Thomas
lisarey@olympicch.org
(360) 633-9116
www.olympicch.org

Olympic Community of Health Hosts 2nd Annual Opioid Summit

Over 300 representatives from the Olympic region gather to report on, coordinate opioid response.



Top: Ann Penn-Charles, Quileute, recognizes Olympic Community of Health's Lisa Rey Thomas for her opioid response advocacy at the 2018 Opioid Summit on October 17th.

Bottom Left: Police Chief Sam White of Port Gamble S'Klallam discusses Tribal Healing Opioid Response (THOR) at the 2018 Opioid Summit on October 17th.

Bottom Center: Commissioner Mark Ozias makes closing remarks at the 2018 Opioid Summit on October 17th.

Bottom Right: Dr. Susan Turner and Commissioner Kathleen Kler speak at the 2018 Opioid Summit on October 17th.

The effort to address the opioid crisis in the Olympic region (Clallam, Jefferson, and Kitsap counties) is led by passionate professionals and committed advocates. That was the message of the 2nd Annual OCH Regional Opioid Summit on October 17th at the Suquamish Clearwater Conference Center, hosted by the Olympic Community of Health (OCH). Over 300 attendees from multiple sectors in the Olympic region and surrounding areas participated in the event.

“We were thrilled to see so many new faces and such a great turn out at the summit,” said Dr. Elya Prystowsky, OCH’s executive director. “When so many committed and intelligent people gather together, fueled by a shared aim, the energy in the room is palpable.”

The Opioid Summit featured a full slate of presenters who have been working together over the past two years; their presentations prompted important questions and lively discussion. Topics included in the agenda were focused on the region’s collaborative implementation of the regional opioid response plan. Presentation slides and the Opioid Summit agenda are available on OCH’s website, www.olympicch.org.

“In the last two years, our three counties have made great strides toward tackling the opiate epidemic in our communities, improving prescribing practices, increasing access to evidence-based treatment, and reducing overdoses,” said Dr. Allison Unthank, who is the Clallam County Health Officer and Physician Manager for Addiction Medicine with the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe. “There’s a lot of work left to do,” continued Unthank, “but I feel confident that through the collaboration forged by 3CCORP and the OCH, we will get there.”

In 2016 OCH launched a three-county coordinated opioid response initiative, 3CCORP. The initiative aligns the Olympic regional efforts with Washington State’s opioid response plan and is integrated with the Medicaid Transformation Project. The Opioid Summit—3CCORP’s largest partner convening—is designed to advance the work of those addressing the challenge of the opioid crisis in the Olympic region. “It is such an honor to witness the great work being done in this region and beyond,” said Lisa Rey Thomas who staffs 3CCORP, is member of the Tlingit Tribes and Director of Community and Tribal Partnership at OCH, “I feel privileged to work with such

amazing and committed friends, colleagues and partners as we collaborate to strengthen healing, recovery and wellness in our communities.”

The 300-plus attendees at the Opioid Summit included care providers, mental health providers, substance use disorder providers, dental providers, American Indian/Alaska Native and tribal partners, tribal leaders, public health and local government officials, law enforcement, fire/EMS, emergency department providers, educators, students, school district staff, representatives from federal agencies and community members. With the Salish Behavioral Health Organization, OCH hosted the first annual Regional Opioid Summit in January 2017. Over 230 people gathered in Kingston, Washington for the event, many of whom attended the 2018 Summit.

About Olympic Community of Health: Olympic Community of Health is an Accountable Community of Health, one of nine in Washington State, serving Clallam, Jefferson and Kitsap counties. We are in the territorial lands of the Sovereign Nations of the Hoh, Jamestown S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Makah, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Quileute, Quinault and Suquamish. Our purpose is to facilitate health care delivery transformation and community health improvement across the Olympic region. The OCH Board of Directors consists of leaders from tribal nations and health sectors within our region.

###