



# HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS

## Clinic closure notice for February

• Monday, Feb. 15: Closed all day (Tribal Chiefs Day/  
Presidents' Day)

Please be sure to plan ahead for  
appointments and medication refills!

## State-Sponsored Health Care Coverage Recertification

If you receive information from your state-sponsored health care coverage notifying you of recertification, it is very important that you recertify. If you do not recertify, you risk a lapse in your coverage.

The Skookum Health Assistance Program is a payer of last resort. If you have or are eligible for any other coverage, including local, state, federal or private health insurance at a small cost to you, we strongly encourage you to apply and use it as primary coverage. If you are eligible for coverage at no cost to you, you will be required to apply and use it as primary coverage before Skookum will be able to pay.

If you apply for your state's coverage or coverage through the federally facilitated health insurance marketplace and are not eligible, you will need to send documentation of ineligibility to the Save Our Skookum team. If you apply and are eligible, we will need a copy of any insurance cards to coordinate payment with the Skookum Health Assistance Program.

If you have questions, please contact:

- Barbara Steere at 503-879-2487 or [barbara.steere@grandronde.org](mailto:barbara.steere@grandronde.org)
- Tresa Mercier at 503-879-2008 or [tresa.mercier@grandronde.org](mailto:tresa.mercier@grandronde.org)
- Loretta Meneley at 503-879-1359 or [Loretta.meneley@grandronde.org](mailto:Loretta.meneley@grandronde.org)
- Melody Baker at 503-879-2011 or [melody.baker@grandronde.org](mailto:melody.baker@grandronde.org)
- Tauni McCammon at 503-879-1406 or [tauni.mccammon@grandronde.org](mailto:tauni.mccammon@grandronde.org)
- Erica Mercier at 503-879-2080 or [erica.mercier@grandronde.org](mailto:erica.mercier@grandronde.org)

## Storytelling skills to help improve speech/ language therapy in Native communities

By Sarah Ross

*Tribal Speech / Language pathologist*

The love of storytelling begins by listening to Tribal Elders, becoming entranced by Tribal storytellers and later learning to share our own story. Our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles all contribute to the stories we share in our families and in our community.

Today, traditional stories are shared orally, in written word and on stage. Renowned Northwest storytellers Ed Edmo, Sherman Alexi, Gyasi Ross and Tlingit Raven Dancer Gene Tagaban are known for a variety of storytelling mediums. The Tears of Joy theater in Portland produced a version of "Raven Steals the Sun" in 2013 and JANE Theater Company ran "Ghosts of Celilo" in 2011.

I've always hoped that Tribal stories would come alive for my children like they did for me, so four years ago our family hosted our first community storytelling gathering. Families from Washington, Oregon and northern California continue to come together for this annual event. Our goal is to provide a place for families to share. We want our children to hear these stories again and again, because someday those youth will be our Elder storytellers.

Among the participants have been Tribal members from the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, Coquille Tribe and Yakama, as well as Grand Ronde Tribal members highlighting traditional stories of the Willamette Valley and Columbia River. It is important to my family that our children hear those sacred stories from our homelands and be in those places that those things happened. During the different seasons we will take them to the places that those stories took place and tell them "Remember this!" so that they can see, touch and feel it.

The Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center is working in partnership with Worcester State University to document storytelling skills in Native American youth. Information collected from this project will be used to help improve speech/language therapy in Native communities across the country.

Tribal youth ages 11 to 13 are invited to participate and will learn a traditional Columbia River story and receive a gift for their time. To sign up or request more information, please contact Sarah Ross at 503-879-2006.

*Sarah Ross is a Speech / Language Pathologist at the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center and an officer on the Tribe's Culture Committee. In her free time, Sarah enjoys scuba diving and building relationships with plants historically used in traditional medicines and weaving.*

## Mail order terminated for other Tribes

In October 1997, the Pharmacy opened for business at the grand opening of the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center (GRHWC). The Pharmacy was established to provide high-quality services to Tribal members and the surrounding community; with a mission to provide excellent medicine, medication counseling and responsive review. Pharmacy staff collaborate with medical providers and patients to ensure safe, effective pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical alternatives are considered for patient treatment.

In 2008, the Tribe ended the use of an outsourced pharmacy mail order service for the Tribal health plans and the GRHWC Pharmacy began providing these services. This internally sourced pharmacy mail order service was marketed to other Tribes in Oregon and Washington in 2012, and in 2013 three Oregon Tribes commenced using the GRHWC Commercial Pharmacy mail order service. Current Pharmacy operations include services to Tribal members, Native Americans of other Tribes, employees and community members via local and mail order services.

The original intent of the commercial mail order Pharmacy program was to provide a valuable service to other Tribes, while generating enough income to cover all expenses of the Pharmacy. In October 2015, it was determined the GRHWC commercial mail order Pharmacy operations were not profitable and the program was detracting from provision of services to Grand Ronde Tribal members; though the intent of the program was commendable, the expenses to operate the program exceeded the generated income.

Due to this inequity, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde made the difficult decision to terminate its mail order pharmacy arrangements with the three Oregon Tribes contracted for the service. In October these Tribes received a 90-day notice of the program's closure and were notified the last day of the service was Jan. 31, 2016. **This closure does not affect other mail order operations provided at GRHWC Pharmacy.**

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Rowe at 503-879-2236.

## Important information for Tribal members with The Skookum Health Assistance Program

**If you reside outside of the service delivery area, this is important information for you.**

For several months, the Save Our Skookum team has provided information and correspondence to Tribal members and providers about receiving Out of Network services. What does that mean?

That means Skookum uses a network of providers (there are many networks and where you live determines what provider network you are in) to receive discounts on services you receive. This saves Tribal dollars while providing a large selection of provider choices to the membership.

Starting in 2016, if you chose to receive services from an Out of Network provider, the Skookum Health Assistance Program will only pay up to 70 percent of the charges your provider bills for the services you receive. You will be responsible for the other 30 percent of the charges.

**THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO TRIBAL MEMBERS WITH MEDICARE!**

Please share this information with your friends and family and be sure to contact us with any questions you have.

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### **łaxayam kʰanawi łaksta (Hello Everyone):**

Time for your favorite Save Our Skookum team to start reminding Tribal members without primary coverage to start exploring the Affordable Care Act resources. This includes state Medicaid programs.

We need everyone who DOES NOT have primary health insurance coverage to apply for coverage and provide proof of application to SOS. If you are eligible for coverage at no cost to you, we ask that you use it primary to the Skookum Health Assistance Program (SHAP). This saves the health program (and you) by not paying primary.

SHAP is not insurance coverage. It is a payer of last resort, which means the program is funded by the Tribe to assist Tribal members with eligible health care costs and pays as a last resort.

**This notice does NOT apply to members with Medicare, employee coverage or other health insurance.**

If you have questions, please call one of the SOS team members at 800-775-0095 or 503-879-5211 and ask to speak to Tresa Mercier, Loretta Meneley, Barbara Steere, Melody Baker, Tauni McCammon or Erica Mercier.