



**CENTRAL COUNCIL**  
*Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Tlingit & Haida Forms Addiction Action Committee**

**Juneau, AK** (March 27, 2018) – Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) has formed an Addiction Action Committee to increase capacity to address and help reduce opioid and other substance addictions in Tlingit & Haida’s communities. The committee will focus its efforts on expanding resources and access to addiction prevention, treatment and recovery strategies and will develop cultural solutions that address public safety and related drug court issues that stem from addiction. In addition to examining existing data on the issues associated with substance addiction, the committee will develop a monitoring system that evaluates the progress made in combating these addictions.

According to the Alaska Opioid Policy Task Force’s 2017 report, the rate of heroin poisoning resulting in hospital admissions doubled from 2008-2012, the number of heroin associated deaths more than tripled in Alaska from 2008-2013 and the rate of heroin-associated deaths in Alaska was 42% higher than the United States overall in 2012.

“Addiction has an extremely negative impact on our people and now with the ever increasing opioid crisis, we are seeing even more hurt and devastation,” said President Richard Peterson. “It’s time that we come together and work towards meaningful solutions. We need to build collaborative relationships with municipal, state and federal governments, as well as with medical providers and other institutions. This is no longer their problem – it’s our problem collectively and it is collectively that we will solve this issue. It is with this in mind that I’ve decided the time is right to form a committee made up of all of our communities. I am thankful to our chosen Delegates to serve on this committee and especially to our committee chair Jackie Pata for stepping up to address addiction head on.”

The committee is comprised of the following Tlingit & Haida Delegates:

|                     |                 |                       |                   |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Jackie Pata (Chair) | Robert Starbard | Holly Burns-Churchill | Catherine Edwards |
| Tasha Hotch         | Lisa Lang       | Eva Rowan             | Rachel Moreno     |
| Maxine Thompson     | James Jack Sr.  | Nathan Lopez          | Luella Knapp      |
| Judy Helgesen       | Delbert Kadake  | John Jay Silva        | Cynthia Petersen  |
| James Hart          | Paula Peterson  | Candace Williams      |                   |

It is the committee’s belief that with strong resilient tribal citizens, addictions like the opioid epidemic can be successfully combated and healthy environments for our current and future generations can thrive.

“Addictions plague our communities and shift in type based upon supply and demand like the current opioid crisis in Alaska,” said Addiction Action Committee Chair Jackie Pata. “What we do know is that it takes local action to create lasting solutions and environments for our tribal citizens to thrive. The Addiction Action Committee is a team of community leaders committed to understanding the issues, seeking partners and resources and ensuring there are local strategies for success.”

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