Association of American Indian Physicians announces new leadership

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Staff News Writer

The Association of American Indian Physicians (AAIP) has announced the selection of Polly Olsen as its new executive director. Olsen will start in September, filling the position currently held by Margaret Knight, who is retiring after 27 years with the organization. The AAIP Board of Directors selected Olsen after a national search.

Olsen has more than 14 years of experience in academia and health care. She is currently the director of community relations at the University of Washington, where she liaisons between tribal communities, organizations and the academic institution. Previously, Olsen was the director of the Native American Center of Excellence in Seattle. She also serves at the president of the board of directors for the Seattle Indian Health Board. Olsen is an enrolled member of the Yakama tribe.

The AMA Minority Affairs Section (MAS) is pleased that since its inception, the AAIP has had a seat on the AMA-MAS Governing Council. The current AAIP representative is Donald K. Warne, MD.

Dr. Warne is the director of the Masters of Public Health Program at North Dakota State University, and he serves as the senior policy advisor to the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s Health Board. In addition, he is an adjunct clinical professor at the Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law, where he teaches American Indian health policy. Dr. Warne is a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe from Pine Ridge, S.D., and comes from a long line of traditional healers and medicine men.

The AMA-MAS will exhibit at the AAIP’s upcoming annual meeting and national health conference, July 27–Aug. 2 in Tulalip, Wash.