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Health-care leader gets key post with national group

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A local health-care leader has been elected to the executive committee of the National Association of Community Health Centers.

Anita Monoian, chief executive officer of Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, was elected vice speaker of the house Sept. 18 and will lead various committees and step in to oversee the organization's house of delegates in the speaker's absence.

Established in 1970, the National Association of Community Health Centers represents more than 1,000 federally qualified health centers nationwide that provide health care to underserved or uninsured people disadvantaged by low incomes and other barriers. The trade association is based in Bethesda, Md., but the election took place at the annual conference in Miami.

Monoian has served as vice speaker of the house since she was appointed to fill the vacant position in November 2004.

"It's a wonderful group to work with," she said. "I'm really looking forward to it. We haven't had a lot of representation from this region."

In the organization's history, only four people from Region 10, which includes Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Idaho, have served on the executive committee, Monoian said.

Monoian has been at the helm of Neighborhood Health Services, a private nonprofit clinic established to serve low-income populations, for 27 of its 30 years and believes that her progress there will help her on the national executive committee.

"We've really gone from being a very, very small preventive health-care site to being full-scope primary care," she said.

Monoian's new national position will also benefit Yakima, said Kathy O'Meara-Wyman, who works with Monoian on public relations projects at Neighborhood Health.

"She brings these tremendous national connections and knowledge to health-care delivery right here," O'Meara-Wyman said.