



# CALIFORNIA Youth Regional Treatment Center (YRTC)

JANUARY 2016

## CALIFORNIA AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

### WHAT IS THE YRTC?

- Desert Sage the Southern California YRTC is located in Hemet.
- The facility will have 32 beds, 3 close observation rooms, and 5 family units.
- When completed and fully operational the facility will employ approximately 70 staff
- The YRTC will be a coed inpatient facility for youth (ages 12-17) with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.
- The anticipated opening of the facility is Fall of 2016.
- For updates on the YRTC go to:

<http://www.ihs.gov/california/index.cfm/yrtc-project/>

## YRTC Newsletter

As we usher in 2016, we are very excited at the progress of the Youth Regional Treatment Center (YRTC), named Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center, in Southern California.

In this first newsletter, we wanted to share with you important information such as logistics of the site, the progress to date, a construction update, hiring information for the facility, and a brief update on the planned Northern California facility (Sacred Oaks Healing Center).

We hope that this first newsletter will not only inform you, but inspire you as well.



Artist's rendering of completed facility



## Best Practices Meeting

During the annual Best Practices meeting (held in Sacramento May 9-11, 2016) there will be an extensive update on the YRTC process that will include detailed information on the intake process, treatment offered, educational plan, and the discharge and aftercare process. It is **highly recommended** that staff referring youth to the treatment center attend the conference on May 9<sup>th</sup> as this could be the only in-depth and in-person opportunity to participate, ask questions, and offer suggestions about the YRTC with the Indian Health Service.

## Logistics

Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center, the Southern California YRTC, is located south of Hemet. The facility will be a co-ed inpatient facility for youth (ages 12-17) with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders. The facility will have 32 beds, 3 close observation rooms, and 5 family units. When completed and fully operational, the facility will employ approximately 70 staff.

## Progress to Date

We have been busy in the last few months! In addition to working with the contractors on the final construction plans, we have made numerous trips to the construction site to facilitate tours by tribal members and tribal leaders. We have visited other YRTC's in Nevada, North Carolina, and Oklahoma to gather best practices to incorporate into our policies and procedures. To date, we have completed 99% of the policies and procedures for the facility, ensuring that they meet the IHS, Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), and state licensing requirements.

We are happy to report that our meetings with the local school district (Hemet Unified) have been positive and we are looking forward to offering our youth an educational program that will enable them to transfer their credits back to their local schools.



The former "Pond area" looking towards the residential units

Sustainability has been an important issue for the facility. We have hired a billing/office manager to facilitate the billing process. We have also held meetings with the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), the California State Indian Health Program, and interested parties regarding our billing options for the facility.

In addition to all of the above, we are in the process of contracting with all of the services that will be needed for the facility, such as propane, electricity, internet, garbage, laundry service, and food, to name a few. We are also identifying all of the necessary equipment and supplies for the facility, such as furniture for living quarters and the offices, computers for staff and the youth, all associated supplies such as pens and papers, copiers, fax machines, linens, towels, rugs, garbage cans, pots and pans, dishes, kitchenware, cleaning supplies, and medical supplies and equipment. The list is very long and grows every day!



Cultural and administration building

## Update on Construction

The anticipated construction completion date is March 18, 2016. After construction is complete the facility will need to be furnished and staff hired.

## Services Offered

We want to ensure that there are plentiful therapeutic and educational opportunities at the Desert Sage facility. Desert Sage will offer individual and group counseling, as well as a credentialed education program. The education program will be tailored to each individual with credits issued by the Hemet Unified School District. In addition to counseling and education, the facility will offer access to medical and dental care, cultural activities, and field trips to local historical and recreational sites.

The facility will have an on-site commercial kitchen and will prepare nutritious meals every day. The facility will also be equipped with a recreation room, a weight room, an outdoor water feature and amphitheater, as well as an indoor half court gym and an outdoor basketball court.

## Aftercare Project

Aftercare is one of the most important and often the most challenging aspect of the recovery process. It is important that once the youth return to their communities, that they stay engaged in the recovery process. However, our resources are limited and we cannot extend our services beyond our four walls, therefore our goal is to ensure that we know what these youth have available to them once they return home. Our Intake/Aftercare coordinators will work with local personnel on the discharge planning process as soon as the youth is admitted to Desert Sage.

In order to assess the services that are available at the local level, the IHS has contracted with the firm of JL Ward and Associates (James Ward) to perform an assessment of 17 Tribal and Urban programs. The goal of the assessments is to determine how we can assist the youth after they are discharged by identifying possible resources for them in their communities.

Starting in December of 2015, James Ward will contact specific sites to schedule on-site interviews with administration, behavioral health, medical, and any social services staff that may be involved in the care for the youth once they return home. We strongly encourage you and your staff to make yourselves available to this consultant as this will assist us with aftercare planning.

## Therapeutic Modalities

Research has demonstrated that the majority of youth (80% in some studies) in residential substance use disorder treatment have suffered significant trauma. Traumatized youth have difficulty with interpersonal trust, difficulty with emotional regulation and difficulty seeing a positive vision of the future. Many are just in “survival mode”.

Treatment will be less likely to be successful if the youth's trauma, and the results of trauma, mentioned above, are not addressed. So, Desert Sage has developed a curriculum which makes trauma and its effects, a central treatment focus. This is done by training all staff who interact with youth in “trauma-informed care”. Trauma-informed care (TIC) is a treatment philosophy and a set of treatment guidelines which take the youth's trauma history into account in every interaction. TIC informs all aspects of care with youth including the manner in which treatment decisions are made, the manner in which communication with the youth occurs and the manner in which behavior modification is delivered.

Additionally, one of the formal therapies used at Desert Sage will be dialectic behavioral therapy. This form of therapy helps the youth to develop the ability to manage their emotions, using mindfulness strategies to develop the “wise mind”, and to use effective communication with others.

Our goal will be, not only to help the youth not to drink and use, but also to be emotionally healthy adults with healthy habits and positive relationships.



## Update on Sacred Oaks Healing Center

The name of the northern YRTC, as selected predominantly by the northern California Tribes, has been approved as “Sacred Oaks Healing Center”.

This northern property was acquired as a portion of a larger parcel, 640 acres of D-Q University land. Our next effort following the purchase was to obtain an Assessor’s Parcel number and a street address. Both have been accomplished. Prior to start of design, an Environmental Assessment (EA) needed to be obtained. The EA is complete and led to a “Finding of No Significant Impact” or FONSI, which was approved in December by the Area Director. Upon approval of the Program of Requirements at Indian Health Service Headquarters, the contracting office in Dallas will begin the search for a design/build contractor for the Sacred Oaks Healing Center. We expect the design process to begin during the current fiscal year, which would allow construction completion in late 2018.



Courtyard view west of cafeteria and education



Courtyard area looking at administration

## Hiring Update

All positions will be posted on the website [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)

You can also go to the IHS website at [www.IHS.gov](http://www.IHS.gov) to search for available jobs. You are encouraged to check these websites on a regular basis for future vacancy announcements.

If you have any questions about the application, interview, or hiring process, please contact the Area Office HR Department.

## Contact Names and Numbers

If you would like more information about the YRTC, or would like to schedule a personal presentation to your group, contact:

**Mark Espinosa**  
**650 Capitol Mall, Suite 7-100**  
**Sacramento, CA 95814**  
**916-930-3981 Ext. 315**  
**mark.espinosa@ihs.gov**



Entry viewed from southeast



Cafeteria area looking out onto courtyard