



Indian Health Service Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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IHS Announces Construction Completion of Youth Regional Treatment Center in Hemet, California

35,500 square-foot facility will have 32 beds and family accommodations

The Indian Health Service is pleased to announce the completion of construction and the awarding of a LEED Silver rating to the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center in Hemet, California which is about 90 miles east of Los Angeles. This is the first federally operated facility in the IHS California Area.

This center will provide alcohol and drug abuse treatment services to youth ages 12 to 17. The staff will include credentialed teachers, a psychologist and psychiatrist, 24-hour nursing staff, a full kitchen staff, recreational specialists, therapists, intake and aftercare staff, and cultural advisors, as well as maintenance, facility and support staff. There will also be access to medical and dental services. It will treat up to 32 youth at a time with a full-time staff of 70 employees. Six employees are now on site.



The Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center in Hemet, Calif. will open later this year and provide behavioral health services to youth ages 12 to 17.

“This is part of the continuing IHS commitment to provide quality behavioral health care to this age group,” said Mary Smith, IHS principal deputy director. “IHS is working to make sure that Native youth have a facility that will not only help them address substance abuse problems but also offer a program that will provide culturally appropriate rehabilitation and education.”

This youth treatment center will feature additional intake beds for those transitioning in or out of the facility and there will also be five family units. It is important that families are closely involved in the rehabilitation of their children.

Congress approved funds to build two youth treatment centers in California, this southern location in Hemet and a northern site in Davis. The monies were appropriated in 2015 for the planning and construction of the Desert Sage Youth Wellness facility which is set to open late this year.

In total, there will be 13 Youth Regional Treatment Centers across the United States. A current listing of the ten YRTCs can be found at www.ihs.gov/yrtc. In addition to the two California YRTCs, a YRTC in Portland, Oregon, will open in the near future.

LEED certification of the youth treatment center was based on the number of green design and construction features that positively impact the building and its immediate environs and the broader community. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), is the nation's pre-eminent program for environmentally conscience design, construction and operation of high-performance green buildings.

The California Area Indian Health Service provides the healthcare delivery system to the state of California, home of the largest population of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the country. California is home to 107 federally-recognized tribes. There are presently 31 California tribal health programs operating 57 ambulatory clinics under the authority of the Indian Self Determination Act. IHS funds eight urban health programs that operate under the authority of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

The IHS, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.

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