



**Press Release**  
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## **Indian Health Service Opens Three New Staff Housing Units in Montana**

The Indian Health Service (IHS) announced the opening of three new staff housing units to help improve recruitment and retention efforts of medical professionals at IHS facilities located throughout the agency's Billings Area. Grand opening ceremonies were held this week in Montana at the Blackfeet Hospital in Browning, the Fort Belknap Service Unit in Harlem, and the Crow/Northern Cheyenne Hospital at the Crow Agency. Nationally, the job vacancy rate at IHS facilities is more than 30 percent.

"These new quarters are more than just a building—they are an investment in our workforce infrastructure," shared Acting IHS Deputy Director Darrell LaRoche during an opening ceremony held at the Blackfeet Hospital on August 26. "By providing housing for medical professionals recruited from outside the local area, we are removing one of the biggest barriers to joining—and staying—on our team."

The nearly \$20 million for construction of the Blackfeet Hospital's living units came from the Healthcare Facilities Construction Funds, Non-Recurring Expense Funds, and Medicare and Medicaid collections. It will enhance efforts to provide health care services to more than 8,600 patients by offering housing to medical professionals through 14 units—a mix of dorm-style, two-bedroom, and one-bedroom apartments—that offer 24 bedrooms in total, all located on the Blackfeet Hospital campus.

On August 27, another grand opening ceremony was held for the new Fort Belknap 4-Plex Apartment Building on the traditional territory of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Nations. Funded through a blend of Health Care Facilities Construction Funds and Medicare and Medicaid collections that total around \$1.8 million, the apartment building helps strengthen the ability of the Fort Belknap Service Unit to meet the health care needs of more than 4,900 patients.

The third living facility to open was the Medicine Spotted Beads Housing Complex on August 28 in partnership with the Crow Tribe and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. Located at Crow Agency, the new housing complex offers 18 living units—studios, one-bedrooms, and shared quarters—that can house 24 health care professionals to help address the 47 percent job vacancy rate at the Crow/Northern Cheyenne Hospital.

"These new employee quarters reflect our commitment to creating the conditions where health professionals can thrive," said IHS Billings Area Acting Director Asha Petoskey. "When we invest in our workforce, we strengthen the foundation of care for the patients and families who rely on us every day."

The three new living units represent an investment by IHS to strengthen operations, enhance staff well-being, and ultimately improve care for the tribal communities that we proudly serve for years to come.

The IHS, an agency in the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#), provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.8 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to [574 federally recognized tribes](#) in 37 states. Follow the agency via social media on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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