

**Navajo Area
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2022 1st Quarter Report
July - September 2021**

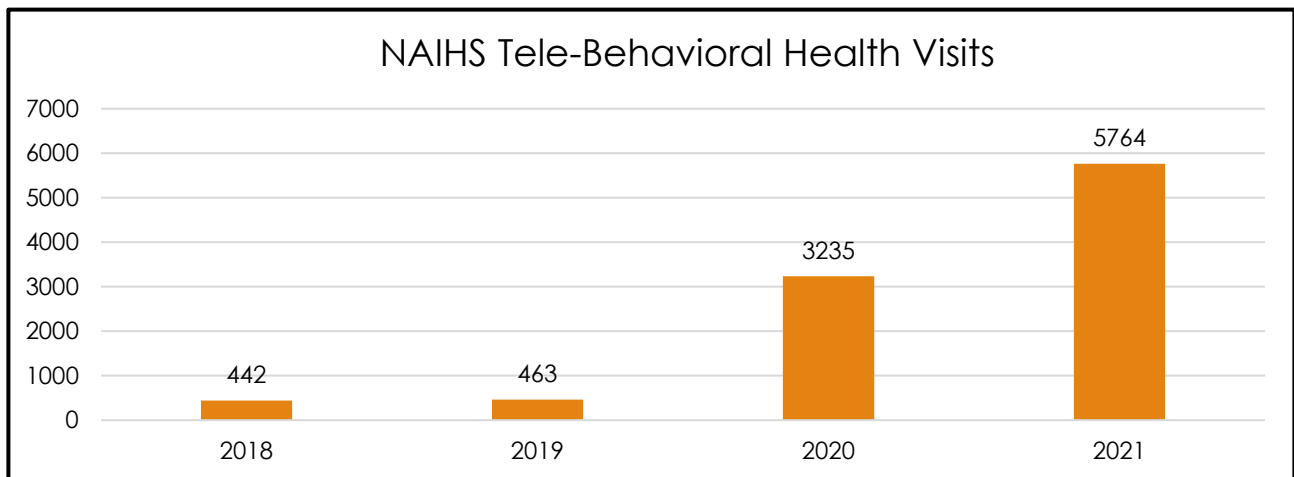
<p>Tribal Representatives:</p> <p>Jonathan Nez, President, Navajo Nation Carl Slater, Delegate, 24th Navajo Nation Council</p>	<p>Federal Liaison:</p> <p>Roselyn Tso, Area Director Marquis Yazzie, Director, OISD</p>
<p>The Navajo Area Indian Health service is pleased to submit this report to the Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee. The report provides updates on Navajo Area IHS' efforts to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.</p> <p>This report primarily focuses on our work to reopen health care services to pre-pandemic levels while we continue to cover the COVID 19 Pandemic in Navajo country. We appreciate and recognize our Navajo Area staff that continue to put our patients and people first. Thank you to the Navajo Nation for your support and advocacy for the people we serve.</p>	
<p>Goal 1: To ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people</p>	
<p><u>Navajo Area Office, Arizona</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Navajo Area Indian Health Service has included the Pueblo Pintado Steering Committee and the Navajo Nation Health Programs in the design development. The Pueblo Pintado Steering Committee includes members from the communities of Canonicito, Whitehorse Lake, Torreon, Ojo Encino, and Pueblo Pintado. The participation of the NAIHS, Navajo Nation Health Programs, and community members will help design a state of the art health center that is both functional and respectful of the community and local cultural beliefs. • Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction and Division of Environmental Health Services: Continued to support the Transitional Watering Points Project, which includes increasing access to safe drinking water and the safe water storage program during COVID-19. Staff continue to support activities with the Navajo Nation, federal partners, universities, and others through the Water Access Coordination Group meetings. At this point, the Navajo Area IHS Office of Environmental Health & Engineering continues triaging inquiries and responding to mission activities associated with this project and IHS Headquarters is still engaged in managing this effort. • Staff from the Office of Indian Self-Determination attended informational webinars on the topic of grant funding for the IHS's new Community Health Aid Program (CHAP). Information gleaned from attending these webinars was then passed along to the Navajo Nation, so that it could apply for funding to study the feasibility of CHAP on the Navajo Nation. 	

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Congratulations to Navajo Area Office staff who participated in the 2021 Just Move It activities which were conducted from June 1, 2021 to August 31, 2021. Participants set goals to reach up to 107 miles during the timeframe and were rewarded with wellness incentives. Many included their family members for support and had a great time! Miles were logged in activities ranging from hiking long trails, power lunch walks, taking a Zoom or outdoor session or supporting Bearsun.



- Reaching 107+ miles were: Jennifer Tsosie, Patricia Begaye, Violet Hosteen, Erika Walker, Elfreida Barton, Margaret Shirley, Bertina Jones, Renee Chase, and Marjorie Ashley.
 - Reaching 75+ miles were Angela Segay and Dr. Chelsea Kettering.
 - Reaching 25+ miles was Lolita Taptto reached 25+ miles. Kevin Gore, Renee Yazzie, Roselinda White, and Cheryl Leslie achieved over 3 miles.
- To increase access to care during the Covid-19 pandemic, **the Navajo Area health facilities expanded tele-medicine/health services**, including expanding into behavioral health service. Replacing in-person clinic visits with virtual visits spiked in Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021.



- **Division of Environmental Health Services** staff conducted environmental health surveys for reopening Tribal facilities (i.e., Head Starts, childcare centers, schools, etc.) during the pandemic. Approximately 20 surveys were completed and written reports were provided to program managers. Survey reports provided recommendations for COVID-19 virus mitigation. Food service reports were also provided to schools (and other facilities) receiving USDA funds to assure compliance with funding requirements.

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Chinle Service Unit, Arizona

- The **Tsaile Health Center** successfully acquired land lease from the Navajo Nation to support future Indian Health Service development to the surrounding communities and is working diligently to have a shovel-ready project ready to present should federal infrastructure development funds become available in FY 2022.
- **Chinle Service Unit (CSU) Incident Management Team (IMT)** sponsored three Stakeholder Town Hall sessions in July, August and September, 2021 for the Tribal leaders and communities of the 16 Chapters of the Chinle Agency. Invitations were also extended to schools, private entities and businesses. The agenda included opening remarks by the CSU Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and opening prayer by the Office of Native Medicine staff. This was followed by a situational awareness report about the COVID-19 pandemic by the Division of Public Health staff, an overview of CSU's response and activation of the CSU IMT goals and activities as well as open and modified clinical services by the Clinical Director and the roles and responsibilities of the CSU IMT by the Incident Commander. The participants were able to ask questions and answers were provided during the discussion session. Closing remarks were given by the CSU's CEO before adjournment.

Kayenta Service Unit, Arizona

- On September 24, 2021, **Kayenta Health Center** hosted a community Flu and COVID-19 vaccine drive-through event. Five hundred (500) community members received their vaccines.



Crownpoint Service Unit, New Mexico

- **Crownpoint Service Unit Division of Public Health Services** provided virtual training on Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR), a suicide prevention training, for 62 Crownpoint Community School staff on July 26, 2021. The training was provided to educate and facilitate cooperation with the local school system. The principal of Crownpoint Community School was very thankful for the training.
- **The Crownpoint Service Unit and Navajo Area Leadership met with Navajo Region 8 Chapters** to provide updates on the service unit and status of COVID-19 within our communities. The meeting went well and our tribal partners thanked us for the information provided. The successful meeting continues our service unit's goal of building coalitions and improving communication with our tribal partners.

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Gallup Service Unit, New Mexico

- **Division of Facilities Management and Engineering worked on Gallup Indian Medical Center's (GIMC) Emergency Department Expansion and Renovation project** and the design was awarded September 10, 2021. The design will be updated to meet current codes and to make final changes to the layout per GIMC Emergency Department (ED) staff. Completion date for the design is April 12, 2022. The project design includes renovating approximately 6,060 building gross square feet (BGSF) and the expansion of 2,282 BGSF of new space. The new ED will be a total of space of 8,342 BGSF. This new renovated and expanded space will help alleviate space deficiencies, as they exist today with the ED, Observation Unit, and the Urgent Care Clinic. The renovation /expansion project will increase patient capacity and enhance patient care services.

Shiprock Service Unit, New Mexico

- Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC) and the University of New Mexico (UNM) Family Medicine Rural Residency Program recruited applicants from across the United States. In May 2021, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education Programs accredited the Residency Program to train family medicine physicians. The Residency Program plans to welcome its first two residents to UNM in the summer of 2022. So far, 400 applicants have applied. From this large pool of applicants, 100 are from medical and dental schools and 10 applicants are identified as American Indian and Alaska Natives. NNMC will review and reduce the applicant pool to 35 applicants and select two potential applicants for the summer of 2022.

- On August 30, 2021, the **Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC) partnered with Diné College** – Shiprock Campus to co-host a COVID-19 vaccine outreach event to encourage students and staff to get their COVID-19 vaccinations. The event was held at Diné College in Shiprock, NM.



- **Acting Navajo Area Health Information Consultant Provides In-Service Training to Navajo Nation Law Enforcement** – On September 23, 2021, Gary Russell-King, Acting Navajo Area Health Information Management (HIM) Consultant and NNMC HIM Chief conducted an in-service training session for the Navajo Nation Criminal Investigations and Shiprock Police District. Information included law enforcement requests for child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault and related law enforcement situations. Procedures for interviewing victims in the Emergency Department or Inpatient Nursing Unit was also provided. This collaboration ensures communication and cooperation between NAIHS and Law Enforcement officials.

Goal 2: To promote excellence and quality through innovation of the Indian health system into an optimally performing organization

Navajo Area Office, Arizona

- **Division of Environmental Health Services**, partnered with the Navajo Nation Health Department and CDR Donna Gilbert continues to lead the Community Mitigation Group to address community risks related to COVID-19. Comprised of Navajo Nation Environmental Health and Occupational Safety and Health staff, the

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group developed guidance for outdoor recreational areas, temporary food vendors, school sport events, and work considerations for the upcoming holidays.

- **The Navajo Area Division of Acquisition Management and Contracts** recognizes Michelle James, Navajo Area Office (NAO) Contract Specialist, Tanya Begay, Chinle SU Supervisory Contract Specialist, and Misty Billy, Gallup SU Contract Specialist, for outstanding performance during FY 2021 acquisition activities close-out process. With staff support from NAO Finance, the Service Units, Area Office and Headquarters, Michelle, Tanya and Misty were able to award a large bulk buy that will replenish Area-wide IT equipment needs. Thank you for your outstanding work and thanks to the Navajo Area wide Acquisition team.
- **The Navajo Area IHS Human Resources (HR)** staff processed 16,634 personnel actions in the HR electronic system. HR staff identified the largest type of errors in the electronic processing system, such as coding of education and matching position numbers established in system with the correct manager. Throughout the fiscal year, the HR Director and HR supervisors monitored data sets and provided training on technical terminology and use of codes in the system, as well as encouraging HR staff to seek support from each other and sharing outcomes. The end result is having no errors in three large data sets over several pay periods to close out the fiscal year.
- **Carol Leonard Retires from Navajo Area Indian Health Service** - On September 30, 2021, Ms. Carol Leonard, Navajo Area Health Promotion Specialist, retired from the Navajo Area Indian Health Service. Among Carol's significant contributions was assisting in the development and training staff and the public on the Navajo Wellness Model. Thank you, Carol, for your contribution and numerous years of service you have provided for Indian Health Service –Navajo Area Office.

Chinle Service Unit, Arizona

- **Chinle Comprehensive Healthcare Facility (CCHCF)**, a new drive-thru clinic was established to provide rapid COVID-19 testing and an evaluation by a medical provider for patients seeking care for mild respiratory illness. The clinic has been successful in providing rapid, convenient services to the large number of patients seeking COVID-19 testing during the past few months, administering over 300 tests daily. The service also ensures routine non-COVID healthcare services can continue safely within the healthcare facility.

Kayenta Service Unit, Arizona

- The **Kayenta Service Unit Information Technology Department** continues to alpha and beta test clinical RPMS packages that will better capture COVID-19 data. The clinical packages that are in developmental testing stages will assist all IHS facilities to improve patient care in terms of enhanced documentation of the patient flow process, ability to generate reports that are meaningful in terms of care prevention and following up on treatments to resolution so that overall patient care is tracked and monitored by the healthcare team.

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- **Four Corners Regional Health Center Housekeeping** department received six new Royal Basket Trucks Roll-Top Plastic Security Carts in June 2021. These new security carts help create a safe and high-quality health care environment for the patients, housekeeping staff and facility. They improve infection control, are easy to use, and are in compliance with health care environmental safety standards.



- **Four Corners Regional Health Center Water Bottle Filling Stations.** The Elkay EZH2O In-Wall Bottle Filling Stations were installed in six areas at the Four Corners Regional Health Center on August 16, 2021. Infection control measurements were taken by the facility to switch out the previous water spout fountains that could no longer be utilized due to COVID precautions. The new in-wall bottle filling stations are sensor activated, require minimal maintenance, contaminate less, and help reduce plastic bottle water.



Crownpoint Service Unit, New Mexico

- **Crownpoint Service Unit** has dedicated itself to meeting the needs of the patient population during the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 9/30/2021, the service unit administered over 22,262 COVID-19 tests; and almost 17,700 COVID-19 vaccinations. We have held 14 Vaccination events for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2021. Flu vaccinations were incorporated into vaccination events in September 2021.
- **Division of Facilities Management and Engineering is working on the Crownpoint South Quarters Repair-by-Replacement Design Project.** The project will involve a design for the replacement of 33 existing antiquated employee quarters units. The current Longmark units were built in the 1950's and are well beyond their useful life. The new quarters will be energy efficient and bring the quarters into the current century. The project design will include an evaluation of the existing infrastructure, replacement of infrastructure if needed, and a complete design package for the construction of 33 new quarter's units. These new units will help with staff recruitment and retention for the Crownpoint Hospital.
- **The Crownpoint Service Unit has developed "Team Rooms"** in our ambulatory clinics to support the Patient Centered Medical Home and promote a team environment. We have embedded a Purchase Referred Care employee in our Case Manager Team Room that has allowed our Case Managers to work seamlessly with our PRC staff to address patient referrals in an expedited manner. Crownpoint Leadership has received positive feedback from staff on this improvement.

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- **The Crownpoint Service Unit (CPSU)** began its beautification projects to enhance the appearance and appeal of the hospital site. The CPSU painted the ambulatory clinic and lobby areas to improve lighting and create a more welcoming atmosphere; replaced additional outside benches with new benches made out of recycled material; removed shrubbery from alongside some hospital areas to improve sight and present a clean appearance; installed crushed granite rock around the hospital to improve the landscape; and restriped the Crownpoint Healthcare Facility parking lot.
- **Crownpoint Service Unit Executive Leadership** focused on improving its internal policies to meet the demand of a continuously changing environment. CPSU updated the Patient Rights and Responsibilities Policy; revised the Patient Complaints and Grievance Policy; developed a new service unit Dress Code; established a 7-B Files policy; and revised the Quality Council Charter and standing Agenda.

Gallup Service Unit, New Mexico

- The **Gallup Indian Medical Center's Acquisition Program** has shown great improvements and Human Resources (HR) remains a critical process which needs more sustainability.
- The GIMC temporarily relocated clinical services and space to begin renovation of Building 2017 on the GIMC campus. Patients and Overflow ED operations were previously located in outdoor tents, but are now indoors. The overall goal is to maximize space to improve and expand patient services.

Shiprock Service Unit, New Mexico

- **Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC) Employee Resiliency Rounds** - On September 22, 2021, NNMC held Resiliency Rounds for employees to come together and share experiences as hospital workers. Many employees are working extended hours to achieve the common goal of providing the best patient care possible in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Serving patients dedication and commitment places employee safety and wellbeing on the line. Resiliency Rounds allow employees to interact as a team, share personal experiences, and build resilience and wellbeing.
- The Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC) is in collaboration with Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education to establish an accredited Psychology Internship to allow NNMC to serve as a clinical site for psychologists to address the shortage of mental health providers. The purpose of the program is to address mental health provider shortages in the Shiprock Service Unit and NAIHS. In August 2021, the first intern was enrolled in the program.
- NNMC is collaborating with the University of Utah to develop a Pediatric and Emergency Medicine Fellowship Program. During the pandemic surge, the University of Utah assisted NNMC with additional emergency medicine personnel to provide relief to NNMC staff. This collaborative effort has led to the development of a Pediatric and Emergency Medicine Fellowship Program which will add high quality providers to serve our patients.

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Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations

Navajo Area Office, Arizona

- **The Division of Information Technology** staff continues to work with health care facility Chief Information Officers to ensure technology compliance. One of the responsibilities of an Information Officer is to monitor Information Technology equipment to ensure an item is on a 4-year life cycle budget and on an acquisition plan. The Area Office and Gallup Indian Medical Center Information Technology staff continues to assist Kayenta Service Unit for systems updates at Inscription House Health Center. The Center is waiting on servers, computers, and bandwidth to complete the system upgrades. The updates will improve efficiency at this remote location.
- **Gallup Regional Service Supply Center (GRSSC) Team Update** - The Gallup Regional Service Supply Center (GRSSC) welcomes Mr. Orrin Begay as a new permanent Inventory Management (IM) Specialist. Mr. Begay brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to GRSSC and much needed assistance to the IM section. GRSSC will be recruiting for nine additional team members in the coming weeks. These key positions will contribute to a more efficient and effective Supply Chain for all GRSSC customers.
- The **Division of Acquisition Management & Contracts** staff continues to recruit local community members to allow opportunities for a career in the Federal Acquisition Community through an Intern Program. The Contract Specialist Intern Program recruits recent college graduates to support their professional development and provide services to communities. The opportunity is made available in all locations within the Navajo Area Region. To further support the growth of the interns, the Acting Acquisition Director provides maximum opportunity for formal and informal trainings. This is in correlation to the Federal Acquisition Institute training program that formalizes the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Programs for Federal Contracting professionals. Three individuals have entered the program, two at Shiprock Service Unit and one at Kayenta Service Unit.
- The **Navajo Area Human Resources Office** hired 192 employees using the COVID-19 Excepted Service Hiring Authority from October 1, 2020 to September 20, 2021. Of the 192 hires, 97 were hired in the Health Technician series. Temporary hires such as Contact Tracers in the Health Technician series are essential to continuity of operations at all facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chinle Service Unit, Arizona

- **Tsaile Health Center (THC)** is actively training new supervisors on the Incident Command System by way of having them be alternates for more experienced staff. The Nursing Department is fully staffed with permanent (i.e. federal) hires. The Health Center is closing in on hiring more permanent providers than ever before.
- **The Pinon Health Center (PHC)** continues to provide daily Drive Thru Vaccinations Clinic, Drive-Thru COVID - 19 testing, and screening for COVID -19 symptoms for all patients entering the facility. PHC continues to provide Medication Refill - an outdoor service at this time. Patient care services include Outpatient Dept. (OPD), Urgent/Emergent care, Women's Health, Lab, Radiology, Well Child Checkups, Immunizations, Routine Nursing Visits, Counseling, Optometry and Telehealth.

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- The Pinon Health Center (PHC) hosted an annual Chinle Service Unit (CSU) Improving Patient Care (IPC) Collaborative presentations from department staff. This year it was scheduled on September 30, 2021. There were (9) presentations shared via Zoom with CSU employees. The department presentations are PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) quality improvement projects. The PDSAs continue to improve internal processes, patient care outcomes, customer service, employee job satisfaction and morale.

Kayenta Service Unit, Arizona

- **The Four Corners Regional Health Center (FCRHC)** Pharmacy Department implemented LiveQ, a Microsoft Access program used to track and improve patient wait times. As of May 2021, the department achieved an average wait time of 18 minutes. This was a collaborative effort among clinicians, nurses and support personnel to change patient flow along with timely electronic health records documentation. Patients also helped by providing survey feedback and making recommendations
- **Inscription House Health Center** with the assistance and guidance from Kayenta Health Center, completed the "IT Grounding Project", a project that required collaboration and work by Facility Maintenance and IT. This increased the safety of our IT equipment (e.g., servers, towers, etc.) with the goal to enhance the stability of Internet access through the servers. The time to log onto work stations and accessing Internet based programs (such as email), has significantly decreased from 15-30 minutes to no more than 2 minutes. Thus, allowing users to access email, online clinical resources, etc. with greater efficiency to support direct patient care service

Crownpoint Service Unit, New Mexico

- **Crownpoint Service Unit leadership implemented** the use of provider revenue generation reports. The reports allow the executive leadership to address inconsistent patterns promptly and improve collections or access to care issues. This is just another example of how the service unit leadership has implemented tools to deliver timely professional care to our patient population.
- **Crownpoint Service Unit Division of Public Health partnered with Presbyterian Medical Services** and the local Torreon Chapter to hold an educational event promoting awareness and prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. The event was held at the local Torreon Chapter House. Numerous local, and county resources participated and disseminated valuable information to our communities.

Gallup Service Unit, New Mexico

- **The Gallup Indian Medical Center partnered with the University of Arizona and University of New Mexico** to provide ongoing rotation of nursing students. Eleven permanent candidates are in process. Four permanent nurses were hired.
- The Gallup Service Unit continues to fill critical positions, including the Deputy CEO and Director for Tohatchi Health Center.

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Shiprock Service Unit, New Mexico

- **Northern Navajo Medical Center** has embarked on an extensive records archive project. Since 2006, most of the 52,000 medical records at the center were transferred into the RPMS Electronic Health Record system. The next step is to archive the paper medical records to the Federal Records Center for permanent storage. Earlier this month, the health information management employees placed over 6,000 medical records into 400 boxes to be sent to the FRC. Their goal is to complete the archiving project by the end of this year.



- On August 18, 2021, **Northern Navajo Medical Center** celebrated World Breastfeeding Week. The event theme was “Protect Breastfeeding.” The celebration was held to inform, anchor, engage, and galvanize action on breastfeeding and related issues. Members of the NNMC Breastfeeding Taskforce assisted in creating educational posters and serving cake and drinks to celebrate.

