

**Albuquerque Area IHS  
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee  
4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (October – December, 2021)**

<p><b>Area Tribal Representatives:</b> Donnie Garcia, Jicarilla Apache Nation</p>	<p><b>Federal Liaison:</b> Randall Morgan, Albuquerque Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report Prepared by RC Begay, Public Health Advisor, AAO</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 1: (ACCESS) To ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Albuquerque Indian Dental Center (AIDC) assisted the Southwest Indian Polytech Institute (SIPI) in securing more COVID-19 home test kits for returning students. AIDC assisted with the dental collaborative agreement between the Albuquerque Area and a local community college.</li> <li>• The Jicarilla Service Unit (JSU) provided school-based dental clinic services at the Jicarilla Apache school.</li> <li>• The Mescalero Service Unit (MSU) focused on vaccinating all eligible populations with a COVID-19 vaccination booster, e.g. third dosage. MSU dedicated resources to Mescalero Apache Tribe (MAT) schools targeting all ages eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine including the 3<sup>rd</sup> booster dose. Monoclonal antibody treatments for all ages have been ordered and are being provided at MSU. MSU continued to screen non-vaccinated (asymptomatic) MAT employees that work at the Inn of the Mountain Gods Casino.</li> <li>• On December 10, 2021, the Santa Fe Service Unit hosted a filming crew sponsored by the CDC’s Tribal Support Section to produce public service announcements encouraging tribal communities to administer COVID-19 vaccinations to their children aged 5 to 17. Multiple staff at the Santa Fe Indian Health Center, as well as a number of patients, participated in the filming. The filming crew stated the event was a success, and they complimented our staff for their support and organization. SFSU revised and updated all COVID 19 respiratory unit clinical guidelines and purchased STARC wall units in urgent care department. These units will convert open patient areas into closed negative pressure bays, markedly improving infection control and patient/staff safety.</li> <li>• Taos Picuris Service Unit (TPSU) collaborated with Taos and Picuris Pueblos for three drive through flu shot clinics, collaborated with Picuris Pueblo to obtain and distribute home COVID test kits and worked closely with the Taos Pueblo Public Health Nurse (PHN) on case and contact monitoring for identified COVID-19 cases.</li> <li>• Ute Mountain Ute Health Center (UMUHC) assisted with planning activities for community wide COVID surveillance testing and vaccination events for the Towaoc and White Mesa communities.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Goal 2: (QUALITY) To promote excellence and quality through innovation of the Indian health system into an optimally performing organization</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SFSU achieved full 3-year accreditation and Patient Centered Medical Home certification from the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAHC) after it was surveyed on September 30 to October 1, 2021.</li> <li>• The Acoma Canoncito Laguna Service Unit (ACLSU) achieved full 3-year Accreditation and Patient Centered Medical Home certification from their AAHC survey conducted October 13-14, 2021.</li> <li>• The Mescalero Service Unit (MSU) achieved full 3-year Accreditation and Patient Centered Medical Home certification from their AAHC survey conducted December 27-28, 2021.</li> <li>• AIDC exceeded all three dental Government Performance Results Act (GPR) goals for Fiscal Year 2021. In addition, AIDC renewed software agreements for the orthodontics program.</li> <li>• The TPSU completed a mock survey in preparation for their upcoming AAHC survey. TPSU identified two Performance Improvement Studies (One PRC, One Medical/Dental) that have been</li> </ul>	

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assessed and demonstrated positive performance improvement. They will be included in TPSU's AAAHC survey application.

- The Ute Mountain Ute Health Center (UMUHC) CEO was nominated to represent the ABQ Area IHS on the National Quality Council and to participate in quarterly AAO Quality Council meetings.

**Goal 3: (MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS) To strengthen IHS program management and operations**

- To assist with COVID-related demands, the Albuquerque Indian Health Center (AIHC) hired primary care, mid-level provider, and pharmacy contractors. AIHC also extended the term for the emergency hire Medical Support Assistants (MSA) for an additional year. In addition, AIHC hired an Internal Medicine Physician.
- AIHC in partnership with the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and local tribes, conducted periodic updates and reviews to improve testing, vaccine administration and the delivery of services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- JSU shifted work priorities and staff assignments as needed due to the COVID-19 surge and staffing shortages. The JSU Optometry department supported their MSA to train hands-on and through on-line training to become an optician.
- MSU maintained continuous communication and relations with the Mescalero Apache Tribe in relation to all COVID-19 Public Health activities (testing, social media postings, guidance, vaccinations, and education). This included daily communications to the MAT Incident Command Team (ICT) of data concerning active cases, direct contacts, and hospitalizations.
- MSU established additional staffing contracts to ensure staffing levels were met for all clinical (direct patient care) areas.
- MSU remodeled the Optometry department and the Dental Sterilization Lab. Optometry equipment was purchased to provide the latest technology for MSU patients. The dental sterilization lab was remodeled and new dental equipment was purchased.
- The SFSU Governing Board continued to review their operations in relation to various clinical and administrative meetings concerning COVID 19 and patient care services and activities. In late November, the Acting CEO convened an Information Technology/Security/Facilities workgroup to address the following needs: Upgrades in facility Wi-Fi capacity, facility video surveillance, both within and outside all four service unit facilities and expanded collaboration with the Santa Fe Indian School's security department to assist with after-hours surveillance of the Santa Fe Indian Health Center campus
- TPSU reorganized the Incident Command Organization to address both emergency and normal operations and instituted communication platforms for all staff to receive relevant plans.
- TPSU selected a full-time Family Nurse Practitioner and hired a full time Clinical Laboratory Specialist Contractor for six months.