

**Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2023 2nd Quarter Report
October 2022 – December 2022**

<p>Area Tribal Representatives: Donnie Garcia, Chairman, Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board, Inc. [VACANT]</p>	<p>Federal Liaison: Randall Morgan, Director, Office of Tribal Self Determination, Albuquerque Area IHS</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>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In December 2022, the Zuni Service Unit successfully recruited and on-boarded several direct service providers and support staff, including medical technicians for the laboratory, pharmacists and optometrists. • At the Ute Mountain Ute Health Center, an information technology specialist, a nurse practitioner, a nurse, a social worker and a pharmacist were successfully recruited and began their tenure at the healthcare facility. • Despite experiencing a water supply shortage in November that resulted in the temporary closure of the Acoma Indian Health Center, third party collections progressively increased in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2023: October \$1.171 million; November \$1.354 million, and December \$2.329 million. • The leadership at the Albuquerque Service Unit continued to participate in workgroup meetings with consultants from the Innova Group, Area Office leadership, IHS Headquarters staff and tribal leaders to plan for health care facility replacement and construction of new health care facilities. • In accordance with collaborative agreements with several Pharmacy Schools, the Pharmacy at the Albuquerque Indian Health Center served as a site for pharmacy student rotations for 4-6 week durations. • On October 19, 2022, the Jicarilla Service Unit (JSU) held a mass influenza vaccination event that involved JSU Public Health Nursing, JSU outpatient clinic staff and the Jicarilla Apache Nation. 407 flu vaccinations were administered to the community. In addition, Outpatient Nursing offered after-hour adult and pediatric immunization clinics via the urgent care drive through. • The Mescalero Service Unit continued to vaccinate all eligible populations with COVID-19 vaccination boosters, e.g. third dosage. Since establishing an immunization clinic, separate from the facility, COVID-19 immunization rates have increased. Nurses participated in various community functions to administer influenza shots at various sites, including the early childhood development center, two tribal daycare centers, Headstart schools, Mescalero Apache schools and health fairs at the Inn of the Mountain Gods. • On September 22, 2022, the Taos Picuris Service Unit (TPSU) partnered with Taos Pueblo Headstart staff to host the first in-person Headstart Round up since pre-COVID 19. TPSU healthcare providers saw 35 children and their families for physicals, screenings and dental exams as well as immunization updates. Many Taos children got behind on their immunizations during the COVID 19 pandemic and this event was an important step in getting them caught up. • During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2023, the Albuquerque Area Finance Department in coordination with the Office of Tribal Self Determination processed and paid over \$55 million to tribal and urban Indian programs to support their respective health programs and services. 	

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

- On November 10, 2022, the Zuni Comprehensive Community Health Center was notified by the Joint Commission that the facility was fully reaccredited as a Primary Care Medical Home.
- The Mescalero Service Unit Laboratory Department received their full reaccreditation through the Commission on Office Laboratory Accreditation (COLA) after an unannounced survey. The laboratory team received a perfect score from the surveyors with no citations. In addition, the laboratory department received a COLA Lab Excellence Award and Certification for achieving and being compliant with all COLA essential and required criteria at the time of their on-site survey.
- The Taos Picuris Service Unit Laboratory Department received their full reaccreditation through the Commission on Office Laboratory Accreditation (COLA) after an unannounced survey. In addition, the laboratory department received a COLA Lab Excellence Award and Certification for achieving and being compliant with all COLA essential and required criteria at the time of their on-site survey.
- At the New Sunrise Regional Treatment Center (NSRTC), all staff were involved in a performance improvement project designed to increase hand hygiene and improve environmental cleaning. All direct patient care staff at NSRTC also completed training in Youth Mental Health First Aid. New computers were also procured to implement NSRTC's plans to create electronic health records.
- The Acoma Indian Health Center leadership and purchased/referred care staff met with their counterparts at the tribally-administered Laguna Community Health Center to discuss patient care coordination and reviewed processes to strengthen collaboration between the two facilities that serve patients from the same community.
- The Ute Mountain Ute Health Center continued to distribute, collect, and study patient satisfaction surveys as a means to enhance customer service. The results from the past quarter demonstrated UMUHC staff addressed, met or exceeded patient concerns.
- The ongoing development of hybrid schedules for patient appointments to mitigate risk of COVID-19 infection to patients/providers/support staff at the Albuquerque Indian Health Center allowed provider schedules to accommodate 50 percent in-person visits and 50 percent telemedicine appointments. Since the implementation of virtual/telemedicine appointments, there was an overall improvement in compliance with plan of care and missed appointments.
- The Division of Contracts and Grants Management continued to work with the federal service units to increase procurements with small business Indian-owned firms to include the issuance of 5-year term contracts versus emergency one year contracts with large businesses. This was initiated in an effort to increase awards to small business Native-owned vendors, and to support and build financial infrastructure in Indian Country. These awards also helped to retain medical providers and allied professionals for longer durations at federal sites.
- To help promote the Reach Out and Read Program at the Jicarilla Service Unit, all 62 children that were involved in a Well Child Visit received a book to promote early literacy.

Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations

- On November 16, 2022, the Acting Deputy Director, IHS Division of Behavioral Health, the National Data Coordinator, and National Alcohol and Substance Use Lead conducted a site visit to New Sunrise Regional Treatment Center assess and determine the types of support they may provide to NSRTC.
- The Acoma Indian Health Center hosted another quarterly meeting with tribal emergency medical service (EMS) program personnel to enhance collaboration between federal and tribal programs that results in quality healthcare delivery. Discussion topics included Flu/COVID-19/RSV surveillance

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and treatment protocols, inclement weather contingency plans, and “code blue” drills. These quarterly meetings include tribal EMS programs, Tribal fire and rescue departments, the State’s Office of Medical Investigator, Albuquerque Area Office personnel and medical air transport companies that operate in New Mexico.

- Ute Mountain Ute Health Center and Ute Mountain Ute tribal leadership implemented a plan to strengthen its partnership, streamline operations, and improve quality in several tribally-administered programs, including behavioral health and the tribal diabetes program.
- The Albuquerque Service Unit contracted with the Presbyterian Health Center to perform weekly COVID testing at the Albuquerque Indian Health Center and the two federal satellite clinics located in Zia and Santa Ana Pueblos.
- JSU Public Health Nursing continued to meet quarterly with the Jicarilla Apache Nation’s Community Health Representatives, Behavioral Health Department staff, Emergency Medical Services, Police Department, Elder/Disabled program and Social Services program to discuss needs of high-risk elders and associated follow up services.
- On October 19, 2022, the Clinical Director at the Santa Fe Service Unit met with tribal administrators from Circle of Life program, which is part of the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Inc.’s behavioral health network. The ENIPC Executive Director summarized the history and scope of work of the network while the Circle of Life Director gave a more in-depth presentation on the network’s residential and outpatient counseling services. At this meeting, all participants concluded that there was much room for collaboration between the federal and tribally operated programs since both entities serve most of the same communities. After, on November 30, the Circle of Life clinical team visited the Santa Fe Indian Health Center for an in-person meeting with the SFSU Clinical Director and the SFSU behavioral health department for a general introductory meeting. Both teams summarized their respective programs’ services, and discussed strategies for future collaboration and partnership.
- The Taos Picuris Service Unit continued to prepare for the opening of the Picuris Health Station in 2023, which was slowed due to COVID 19 construction challenges. The Health Station will offer basic primary care and public health care nurse services in conjunction with the more comprehensive health services available at the Service Unit’s primary location in Taos.
- The Albuquerque Area Office hired a new Human Resources Director who has been tasked with evaluating the existing HR programs and services and implementing corrective action plans designed to improve the department’s efficiency and in hiring quality personnel.