

**Billings Area
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2023 2nd Quarter Report
October 2022 – January 2023**

Area Tribal Representatives:	Federal Liaison: Jennifer LaMere, Director, Office of Tribal Programs, Billings Area
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Goal 1: To ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people

IHS Director Roselyn Tso visited the Billings Area in November 2022 as part of her tour across Indian Country. Director Tso had the opportunity to meet staff and tour the IHS Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Fort Peck Service Unit facilities. During her visit she shared her priorities with staff and staff shared their accomplishments and initiatives at the local level. The visit also included meetings with the Northern Cheyenne, Crow and Fort Peck Tribes.

Billings Area Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) Orientation was held in October 2022 for newly hired CEO's. The orientation included an overview of the Billings Area Office Departments, IHS Public Affairs, Office of General Council and the resources available to the service units. Newly hired CEOs in attendance included Dr. Babak Nayeri, Wind River Service Unit; Marjorie Spotted Bird, Fort Peck Service Unit; CAPT Damion Killback, Northern Cheyenne Service Unit and CDR Stacey Thomas, Acting CEO for the Little Shell Service Unit.

Billings Area Office of Quality provided Credentialing and Privileging Training for Rocky Boy Health Center staff in January 2023, participants included Rocky Boy Health Center's Credentialing Coordinator, Quality Director, Revenue Cycle Manager and Health Information Management Coordinator.

Wind River Service Unit launched their Integrated Women's Health Clinic in early January 2023, the clinic initiative takes the patient-centered medical home (PCMH) model approach to delivering high-quality, family medicine based women's health care, utilizing patient-centered, culturally appropriate, and team based approach to deliver perinatal, prenatal and postnatal care. The team will also include an APN-Midwife, Pediatrician, Behavioral Health, MCH Nurse, Physical Therapist, Dietician, Clinical Pharmacist and Safety (child seat fitting and education).

Crow Service Unit Dental Department recently applied for a pilot project within the IHS Division of Oral Health, the goal of the project is to raise awareness of Dementia and Alzheimer's among tribal members. The service unit was recently awarded a grant to test the implementation of the Mini-Cog Cognitive test for Alzheimer's and early onset Dementia. This tool will allow clinicians to detect and provide early intervention for at risk patients. The Crow Service Unit Dental Clinic is the only dental clinic in the Billings Area, and one of five programs in the nation to receive this training and grant. The Mini-Cog is a simple screening tool for cognitive impairment, which takes only three minutes to administer. The test will be administered by the dental providers to patients suspected of having cognitive impairment. The project will collect data from January 2023 through June 2023.

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Crow Service Unit Dr. Esham, Dental Supervisor, was selected to be an Expanded Function (EF) Dental Assistant Instructor. Dental Assistants within the Billings Area will have the opportunity to receive EF Training thereby increasing the efficiency and productivity of the clinics within the Area.

Fort Peck Service Unit and Billings Area Office are collaborating with the Fort Peck Tribes to expand housing availability for health care professionals. The goal is to maximize its resources from various local entities in order to provide safe and secure housing for incoming professionals. The IHS has completed the design and engineering blueprints for replication and the Fort Peck Tribes have secured a land base. Monthly meetings are scheduled to actively address various tasks to plan for a phased construction.

Fort Belknap Service Unit held two Woman's Health Clinics on October 18th at the Little River Health Clinic and October 27th at the Eagle Child Health Clinic. This is the first events the service unit has been able to hold post COVID.

Fort Belknap Service Unit has been able to expand additional outpatient clinic services at the Eagle Child Health Clinic, with a new fulltime provider added along with POC laboratory testing which provides for additional diagnostic on-site and eliminating delays for lab results. The service unit also added another day for Optometry services, from one to two days weekly and full pharmacy services are now available at the Hays Clinic with the recent installation of Script Pro Robot.

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

Billings Area Leadership Meeting was held in November 2022, participants included Billings Area and Service Unit Leadership. The purpose of the meeting is for leadership at the Area Office and each respective service unit to share concerns, solutions and ideas on how to improve delivery and access to care across the Billings Area. The meeting included presentations and discussion regarding human resources, acquisitions, purchased referred care, accreditation, equal employment opportunity, tribal programs and the Community Health Aide Program. Thank you Billings Area Leadership for your dedication in working as a team to improve delivery and access to care across the Billings Area.

Billings Area Governance Revitalization Initiative to improve the Governing Board Process is measured by self-assessment pre and post scores and accreditation survey citations related to leadership and governance. Accomplishments for FY2023 include Governing Board standardization complete for all templates and shared with Bemidji Area for their use in input into standardization. Feedback received from Bemidji and incorporated into Billings templates.

Billings Area Continuous Accreditation Readiness Program (CARP) purpose is to build capability of staff to assess adherence to accreditation standards, share information on areas for improvement across the Area to allow all sites to address if their service unit has the same issues, and to assess/address locally if issues identified elsewhere are occurring at any other sites. Accomplishments for FY2023:

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- Onsite and virtual support provided to Crow and Fort Belknap Service Units to support readiness for The Joint Commission surveys as they are awaiting their triannual unannounced onsite survey.
- All sites began accreditation self-assessments in January 2023 with plans to be completed by March and begin addressing findings.
- Monthly lunch and learn session on accreditation readiness held by Area Office to provide support and collaboration across Billings Area. Topics for 2023 include accreditation self-assessment and planning, comprehensive policy review, leadership characteristics and skills development, accreditation tracers, and addressing new TJC requirements.

Fort Peck Service Unit Nursing Program has been reinvigorated through a number process improvements:

- Continuous triage and patient flow improvements.
- Improved best practices through informational sharing from clinic to clinic and rotation of staff to share and learn from local sister clinics.
- Improving communication flow among nursing, provider teams and ancillary staff.
- QAPI program has been improved and enhanced in multiple areas in order to establish a solid foundation through the creation of various monitoring systems and utilization of software tools preparing for The Joint Commission survey.
- Pharmacy continues to implement an excellent pharmacy student preceptor program and obtained six new students from Ohio Northern State University.

Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations

Billings Area Service Units are participating in the IHS Headquarters Housing Subsidy Pilot Program. The housing subsidy may be provided as a recruitment and retention tool to cover a full-time civil service medical employee's expense for housing options within commuting distance of IHS Service Units when 1) Government operated/owned housing at the service units are not available or encumbered. 2) Service Unit identifies critical medical positions that a housing subsidy allowance would increase recruitment and retention efforts.

Billings Area Floating Leadership Team initiated to improve leadership capability and continuity of operations with changes in leadership staff at the service units by having team provider onsite support.

- Established strategic plan with goals and objectives in line with the IHS strategic plan.
- Onsite support provided to Little Shell Service Unit for CEO leadership and nursing.
- Onsite support provided to Fort Peck Service Unit for quality program and nursing program.
- Implemented Primary Care Medical Home (PCMH) workgroup with representatives from all service units to collaborate and share best practices.
- In collaboration with public health nursing, established response plan for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) to address increases in cases.

Fort Peck Service Unit Transportation Pilot Program - The service unit is currently collaborating with the Billings Area Office and other service units to establish a local transportation program. The Fort Peck Service Unit recognizes the need to help accommodate patients and the goal is to increase access to

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quality care services at the local service unit in both Poplar and Wolf Point, working to provide a sustainable program by utilizing Medicaid resources for reimbursement.

Fort Belknap Service Unit has met the Adult Influenza Vaccine GPRA measurement. This was accomplished through partnership with Fort Belknap Tribal Public Health Nursing Program as well as outpatient nursing staff offering vaccination to all patients during all visits. The Service Unit Pharmacy Department also offers walk in appointments for all vaccinations.