

**Billings Area
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2022 3rd Quarter Report
January - March 2022**

Area Tribal Representatives:	Federal Liaison: Jennifer LaMere, Acting Director, Office of Tribal Programs, Billings Area IHS
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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

On April 7, 2022 the **Billings Area** announced the opening of the **Little Shell Health Center** located in Great Falls, Montana. The new 10,000 square-foot facility will provide health care services for the more than 5,000 American Indians and Alaska Natives residing in the metropolitan area of Great Falls, Montana. The new facility provides primary medical care including behavioral health, pharmacy, laboratory and outpatient clinic services. Future plans to include dental, optometry and radiology services are underway. This significant milestone was achieved in partnership with the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.

Wind River Service Unit collaborated with the Morning Star Care Center to provide booster COVID vaccines and flu vaccines to staff and residents. The Service Unit continues to collaborate with Eastern Shoshone Tribal Health to offer COVID vaccination events.

Northern Cheyenne Service Unit implemented the MCN Training Program which provides a broad range of training topics to ensure staff receive important information for safety and quality of care.

Crow Service Unit Nursing Administration collaborated to develop and implement departmental specific competency assessment, orientation and training programs based on the recommendations, standards and guidelines of the specialty nursing associations for each department. Monthly in-service and quarterly skills fairs have been implemented to enhance skills and advance critical thinking skills for nursing and nursing support staff.

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

Wind River Service Unit (Fort Washakie Health Center) was notified they were awarded accreditation for Ambulatory Health Care by The Joint Commission with certification for Primary Care Medical Home effective March 3, 2022. The Health Center’s initial onsite review focused on the overall compliance structure for safety and quality of patient care delivery and compliance with Ambulatory Health Center standards spanning several areas including leadership, national patient safety goals, emergency management, environment of care, infection prevention and control, medication management and rights and responsibilities of the individual.

Northern Cheyenne Service Unit completed the CPC+ Program. The Service Units five year participation in this quality improvement initiative resulted in expansion of services to include Primary Care Coordinators and a more defined role for Case Managers. Care management introduced and implemented risk stratification of all empaneled patients and tracking emergency room visits and hospital discharge follow-ups to improve health outcomes. Behavioral Health integration into outpatient

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services improved access to services. A Patient and Family Advisory Council was formed to receive input from community members and patients to ensure goals are in alignment with the community needs. The time, effort and dedication of staff made CPC+ a success and has resulted in improved services and better health outcomes for our patients.

Crow Service Unit Outpatient Performance Improvement Project created an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) to collaboratively develop a plan of care for high-risk patients. This team consists of the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Service Units' Case Managers, Behavioral Health, Primary Care Team Care Coordinators, Public Health Nurses and Benefits Coordinators. The IDT started in January 2022 and is working in partnership with Partnership to Advance Tribal Health (PATH). The team's goal is to contact 80% of patients seen in the Emergency Department within two (2) business days which has improved follow-up care by greater than 75% since January 2022 and the team has been able to identify systems and patient issues that prevent appropriate follow-up for care.

Wind River Service Unit continues to host biweekly meetings with the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Health Director and staff to provide updates, discuss collaboration regarding health programs such as testing, vaccinations, and contact tracing. The Service Unit's Public Health Nurses continue to promote and support COVID-19 outreach to local schools.

Wind River Service Unit continues to participate in the biweekly calls with the State of Wyoming Epidemiologist, Eastern Shoshone Tribal Health and Wind River Family and Community Health Care System as needed to promote ongoing communication; e.g., COVID positivity prevalence, masking and public health prevention practices that have included education of the intertribal councils.

Billings Area Office of Environmental Health & Engineering conducted onsite Safety Program reviews and consultation at Crow, Northern Cheyenne and Blackfeet Service Units in preparation for The Joint Commission accreditation onsite surveys.

Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations

Billings Area Director and **Area Office staff** participated in meetings with Montana and Wyoming Tribal Leaders and Urban Executive Director's:

- Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council Quarterly Board Meeting held in April 2022
- Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council Health Subcommittee Meeting held in April 2022
- American Indian Health Leaders Meeting held in March 2022

Billings Area Director and **Service Unit Executive Leadership** participated in meetings with Tribal Leaders and participated in local community events:

- Little Shell Tribal Council meeting held in March 2022
- Great Falls Community Event held in March 2022.
- Fort Peck Tribal Council Meeting held in March 2022.

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Fort Peck Service Unit Dental Program Improvement Project in consultation with the Crow Service Unit Dental Staff consisted of a review of the Dental Program with the goal to improve patient access at the Poplar and Wolf Point Clinics. The plan is currently addressing dental staffing, patient scheduling, appointments, customer service, reserve schedule and emergency dental care.

Billings Area Revenue Department has started program reviews at the service unit level:

- The Purchased Referred Care Department conducted a review of three (3) of the seven (7) service units; which included review of practices and policy.
- The Health Information Management Department conducted training with all service units and will review each service unit by the end of the year to ensure compliance with the records management directive to establish all paper records to electronic by December 30, 2022.

Billings Area Contracting Department simplified the procedural requirements for requesting a contract/purchase order and disseminated this information to the Service Unit Chief Executive Officers. Contracting Officers are aligned with Contract Specialist and Purchasing Agents for Area Office and Service Units assignments in order to execute contract actions using micro-purchase, simplified acquisition or negotiated procedures. The rules for routing UFMS requisitions into PRISM has been updated. The Chief of the Contracting Office reviewed current needs and established action plans with the Director of Revenue and the Finance Officer to address concerns identified for contract execution, invoicing and payment process.