

**Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service  
Direct Service Tribes Advisory  
Committee FY 2023 3rd Quarter Report  
January 1 to March 31, 2023**

<p><b>Area Tribal Representatives:</b> Donnie Garcia, Chair, Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board</p>	<p><b>Federal Liaison:</b> Randall Morgan, Director, Office of Tribal Self Determination</p>
<p><b>Goal 1: 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 Santa Fe Service Unit (SFSU) Executive Committee endorsed the creation of a SFSU Palliative Care Program, directed by Dr. Scott Akin, a staff medical officer who is certified by both the American Board of Family Medicine and the American Board of Hospice and Palliative Medicine. In consultation with CAPT Ballantyne and Drs. Smoker and Thompson, Dr. Akin will coordinate the creation of a core team comprised of clinicians, allied health professionals, and business office staff. The team will participate in a year-long training and mentoring program sponsored by The Center to Advance Palliative Care.</li> <li>• The Dental program at the Mescalero Service Unit added an additional operatory to address the oral healthcare needs of the patient population. The three operatories will increase patient access and potentially increase third party revenue.</li> <li>• In January, the Albuquerque Service Unit on-boarded a Family Medicine Physician at the Zia Health Center, one of two satellite health facilities of the service unit.</li> <li>• Several key appointments were made in the Zuni Service Unit, including a Supervisory Physician (ADM/FP), a Clinical Nurse Supervisor and a Supervisory Occupational Therapist. The hiring of individuals into these three positions will improve quality patient care, ensure nurse functions are performed efficiently and improve oversight of the inpatient unit.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Goal 2: 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>• Staff from the Purchased/Referred Care programs at every Federal Service Unit attended an in-person meeting with specialty healthcare vendors, IHS representatives, and the IHS Fiscal Intermediary to address challenges and issues related to the PRC program implementation and discussed options to improve and streamline payment processes and coordination between the vendors and PRC program staff.</li> <li>• At the Albuquerque Service Unit, patient satisfaction survey results revealed services provided by the federal team met or exceeded patient expectations and customer satisfaction.</li> <li>• In January, Dr. Leonard Thomas accompanied IHS Director Roselyn Tso on several site visits to federal and tribal healthcare facilities in the Albuquerque Area. Federal sites included the Ute Mountain Ute Health Center, Santa Fe Service Unit and the Albuquerque Service Unit.</li> <li>• During the RSV and COVID-19 surge in January 2023, the Santa Fe Service Unit clinical teams ensured that patients had access to readily-available supplies to effectively address their needs at home, such as thermometers, pulse oximeters, and home COVID-19 antigen test kits. Using special COVID-19 funding, the service unit maintained a continuous supply of such supplies in general services and in outpatient clinics, to distribute as needed at the conclusion of clinic visits, as well as to deliver to patients and families at drive-through service areas following telemedicine visits.</li> <li>• At the Acoma-Laguna-Canoncito Indian Health Center, the CEO and PRC staff met with representatives at the Laguna Community Health Center to strengthen overlapping responsibilities in the administration of PRC referrals. The discussion focused on identifying solutions to recurring challenges, distributing patient/community education materials and the scheduling of future meetings to monitor outcomes resulting from enhanced collaboration.</li> </ul>	

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**Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations**

- The leadership at the Ute Mountain Ute Health Center continued to collaborate with the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's Department of Health to streamline payments associated with patient referrals under the federally-administered Purchased/Referred Care program. Federal and tribal staff that have a role in processing specialty healthcare referrals meet regularly to ensure timely payments are made to vendors after patient visits to specialty care facilities.
- The Mescalero Service Unit continued to focus on the outpatient expansion project that is designed to improve patient access and patient flow. Despite experiencing barriers and obstacles, the MSU leadership anticipates MSU will break ground in 2023. This project is critical to the healthcare service delivery system and will dramatically improve and expand healthcare services to the community.
- Leadership from the Albuquerque Service Unit continued to attend workgroup meetings with Innova Group consultants, Area Office leadership, Indian Health Service staff from Headquarters and Tribal leaders regarding replacement and establishment of new healthcare facilities, Albuquerque Central and Albuquerque West, respectively. The workgroup completed Site Selection Evaluations (Phase 1) for the new Albuquerque West facility.
- In the second quarter of FY 2023, the Jicarilla Service Unit exceeded third party revenue projections by 14 percent. The additional resources will support the Service Unit in its overall operations.