

**Billings Area
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2023 3rd Quarter Report
January – March 2023**

<p>Area Tribal Representatives: Nizhoni Friesz, Tribal Councilwoman Northern Cheyenne Tribe</p>	<p>Federal Liaison: Jennifer LaMere, Director, Office of Tribal Programs, Billings Area</p>
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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 February 24, 2023, the Northern Arapaho Tribe, entered into a self-governance compact and funding agreement as authorized by Title V of the ISDEAA. The Tribe joins more than 380 federally recognized Tribes participating in the IHS Tribal Self-Governance Program, which provides Tribes or authorized tribal organizations the option to assume IHS program funds and manage them to best fit the needs of their beneficiaries.

Billings Area Office of Quality Management held a Credentialing Verification Office (CVO) Formation Meeting in March 2023, to discuss the formation of the CVO. Meeting included Clinical Directors, Chief Medical Officers, Chief Executive Officers, OGC Attorney, Pharmacists, Nurses, Physician Assistants, Quality and Credentialing Staff to review bylaws, privilege sets, and PI profile for reappointments under a standardized process. The CVO will allow for the Billings Area to credential and privilege providers for the Area, rather than at each IHS federal site. Privilege sets and medical staff bylaws are being reviewed and anticipate ready for vote in April and May Governing Board meetings with implementation after approval.

Billings Area Forensic Healthcare Funding Opportunity - grant awarded on March 1, 2023, from IHS Headquarters Division of Nursing Services for improving capacity to care for and support victims of sexual assault. Funding will be utilized to develop and/or expand services for victims of sexual assault and/or domestic violence at federally operated facilities across the Billings Area. The grant will fund a Forensic Nurse Consultant position to coordinate the project, baseline assessment to be conducted to identify opportunities for improvement, and for procuring needed equipment and supplies to collect and store evidence for all sites. Nurse Consultant will collaborate with advocacy and victims support groups to meet the holistic needs of the victims. Year one (1) Plan includes:

- Hire Area Forensic Nurse Consultant
- Conduct needs assessments at each service unit
- Provide training for nursing and provider staff
- Specialized training for healthcare staff
- Purchase needed supplies and equipment
- Enhance trauma-informed resources

Fort Peck Service Unit held a STI Community Outreach Event in February 2023, in the Poplar and Wolf Point Communities. The service unit restructured its Public Health Nursing Program to increase access to care to better serve the communities of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. The service unit staff collectively implemented new policies and procedures for point of care testing for producing immediate results in order to effectively address the outbreak of STI's. A team of IHS medical providers led to the success of the event while working with the local service unit staff in coordinating efforts with the Roosevelt County Health Department, State of Montana and Fort Peck Tribal Health Program. Services

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included on-site treatment, vaccinations, education and increased resource sharing among the local, State and IHS entities.

Northern Cheyenne Service Unit in partnership with the Crow Service Unit Optometry Department established a weekly optometry clinic for Northern Cheyenne Service Unit patients. The goal is designed to improve patient access to optometry clinical services. The plan addressed patient scheduling, appointments, customer service, reserve schedule and emergency optometry care.

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

Billings Area Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office established a Special Emphasis Program (SEP) Committee which consists of Area Office staff and a Point of Contact at each service unit. The purpose of the committee is to facilitate and celebrate special observances and is designed to provide cultural awareness and recognize the abilities and contributions of all workers. The SEP Committee will accomplish this by creating and conducting commemorative activities for these observances which are educational, employment-related, promote unity for the Area along with diversity and inclusion to bring the communities of the Billings Area together. The project will also include a mentor or buddy for new employees and will assist with the orientation of new staff.

Blackfeet Service Unit is working in partnership with the Blackfeet Tribal Behavioral Health Program Meadowlark Initiative. A Behavioral Health Specialist is placed at the hospital to work with the prenatal population to address addictions and behavioral health issues and to connect patients with community resources.

Little Shell Service Unit opened their on-site Pharmacy and Optometry in January 2023. The Optometry Clinic is open four days a month in collaboration with the Fort Belknap Service Unit Optometrists.

Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations

Billings Area Office of Quality Management staff conducted a three-day Environmental Services Ambulatory Cleaning Training exercise for the Fort Peck Service Unit. Training included best practice classroom education, demonstration, proper technique, return demonstration by the participants, and a competency quiz. The training program included information from the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, CDC, OSHA, CMS and The Joint Commission. The program is set up to include hospital EVS staff training and surgical room training, with adjusted amount of days for training needs.

Crow Service Unit - Lodge Grass Health Center Laboratory underwent a biennial laboratory inspection in March 2023, and has met all the criteria for Laboratory Accreditation by COLA Inc., The health center laboratory was selected by COLA to be a recipient of the COLA Laboratory Excellence Award for their commitment to performing quality patient testing and superior overall laboratory practices. The award was given following a perfect survey (zero citations) and by also demonstrating successful proficiency testing for the prior three testing events.