

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

<p>Area Tribal Representatives: Buu Nygren, President, Navajo Nation Germaine Simonson, Delegate, 25th Navajo Nation Council</p>	<p>Federal Liaison: CAPT Brian K. Johnson, Acting Area Director Marquis Yazzie, Director, Office of Tribal Partnerships</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

Crownpoint Service Unit, New Mexico

- The Crownpoint Division of Nursing is committed to supporting the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) model. The Division of Nursing has posted the promotion of our care teams (i.e., providers and nurses) on bulletin boards in waiting areas and is encouraging patient involvement in their own care. A Health Literacy Performance Improvement Team was also established to ensure that our patients and community members are able to access and understand printed information provided to them with the goal of optimizing their health.
- COVID-19 has demonstrated the urgency and importance of health promotion and disease prevention. The Crownpoint Service Unit Division of Public Health staff have started to go back into the field with restrictions lifted and more places opening their doors. On February 24, 2023, the team united with the Becenti Community to host a “Walk for a Healthy Heart” fun walk on their Tloo’di’tsin Trail. This beautiful trail was created through the collaboration between the Becenti Community Land Use Planning Committee (CLUPC) and UNM’s Healthy Places - Healthy People Team.
- The Crownpoint Service Unit partners with the Navajo Nation Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention Program mobile mammography van service, offering mammography services to patients 40 to 63 years of age at Crownpoint Health Center, Pueblo Pintado Health Clinic, and Thoreau Health Clinic. Two clinic days were held in January 2023, and we have seen an increase in our monitoring of patients who require this critical service. Our patient volume in this age group reached 19.9% as of March 2, 2023. Crownpoint Service Unit’s goal is to reach 28.7% by September 30, 2023.

Chinle Service Unit, Arizona

- Each year, Chinle Service Unit’s Public Health Division develops strategies on how increase vaccination rates. This year, the Pinon Health Center’s Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP) is using Navajo Coyote (Maii) stories to teach moral values and ethics with an emphasis on COVID-19 prevention strategies. In the Navajo culture coyote is depicted as a mischievous character who tends to conduct themselves in the wrong manner. One of the coyote’s counterparts is the horned toad (Cheii), who always offers proper guidance to help Coyote. Navajo cultural knowledge will be used to connect characters in the coyote stories to the importance of COVID-19 prevention practices. The project service location includes nine communities: Cottonwood/Tselani, Low Mountain, Whippoorwill Spring, Blue Gap/Tahchee, Pinon, Hardrock, Forest Lake, Black Mesa/Kitsilli, and Many Farms. Three comic stories will be produced by July 30, 2023. Students may either obtain comic books by manual print or electronically download from a website. By December 30, 2023, collected COVID-19 vaccination data will gauge if there is a positive impact (increased vaccination rate) by the use of Maii stories among youth under age 18.

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- Chinle Service Unit (CSU) continues to expand access to full-spectrum care. One means to achieve this expansion is by integrating “Point of Care Ultrasound” (POCUS) throughout the hospital. CSU is also training more clinicians in acupuncture to better deal with chronic pain, offering additional pain-control options for patients in labor, extending access to vaccination throughout the hospital, and increasing access to testing and treatment for Syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections.
- The Chinle Wellness Center (CWC) facility has been closed since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 emergency response. As the pandemic continued, return of the emergency response team members to regular duties allowed CWC staff to begin providing limited services focusing on physical activity education at outpatient clinics. CWC staff will focus on physical activity best practices to increase awareness, knowledge and skills on the benefits of physical activity, and how being physically active can provide health benefits. These services will be provided at external locations where space is available through collaborative efforts. The intent of this project is to begin implementing new and improved services to help reconnect Chinle Service Unit patients to Wellness Center services. Beginning April 3, 2023, CWC will begin providing telehealth visits. This service will continue until the Wellness Center facility fully reopens.

Pueblo Pintado Health Center, New Mexico

- The new Pueblo Pintado Health Center design contract was awarded on April 20, 2021. As of December 21, 2022, the professional design phase was 98% complete. In the next several months, construction will be solicited publicly for bids. As of the date of this report, it is anticipated that a construction contract will be awarded within nine to twelve months, with a contract awarded June 2024. The health center’s projected completion date is September 2026.
- The NAIHS has enjoyed the participation of the Pueblo Pintado Steering Committee, the Navajo Nation Department of Health, and the Navajo Nation’s health programs in the Pueblo Pintado Health Center’s design development. The Pueblo Pintado Steering Committee includes members from the communities of Canonicito, Whitehorse Lake, Torreon, Ojo Encino, and Pueblo Pintado. Participation of the listed organizations and community members will help design a state of the art health center that will be both functional and respectful of the community and its cultural beliefs.

Gallup Service Unit, New Mexico

- The Gallup Service Unit’s Internal Medicine Clinic High Utilizer Team meets monthly to address patients who frequently visit Gallup Indian Medical Center Emergency Department. Patients are linked with outreach case managers, housing and treatment resources, and certified peer support workers to reduce costly emergency transports.
- In an effort to increase access to subspecialty care, the Gallup Service Unit’s Department of Internal Medicine has hired a part-time Rheumatologist and a part-time Cardiologist. The department also has brought in dermatology and endocrinology volunteer physicians through Brigham and Women’s Outreach Program to provide care to our patients and offer educational opportunities to our staff.
- The Gallup Service Unit Laboratory Department has installed chemistry analyzers for improved laboratory testing. This equipment can provide special testing to include: NTProBNP, and High-Sensitivity Troponin-T. This new equipment will help identify patients who have experienced a heart attack.

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- As of March 2023, the Gallup Service Unit (GSU) transitioned immunization activities from the weekday Public Health Nursing Immunization Clinic to the primary care clinics. The vaccines for COVID-19 and influenza will be provided through the clinics and will allow the integration of the IHS-wide E3 initiative. The GSU Immunization Coordinator continues to work with nursing and clinical leadership to improve the Service Unit's immunization rates for all age groups.
- From January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023, the Gallup Service Unit Public Health Nursing (PHN) Program received 97 Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) or communicable disease referrals. Most of these were for Syphilis cases. Public Health Nurses have been providing appropriate medication and treatment plans. They have also been conducting contact tracing and collaborating with Navajo Nation and McKinley County health officials. Community Outreach education will continue in order to decrease the incidence of this preventable and treatable disease.
- The Gallup Service Unit Division of Nursing participated in the multidisciplinary Quality Assurance Performance Improvement project, which focus on improving safety and quality for IHS beneficiaries. The Nursing Division is involved in sepsis recognition, patient falls, emergency department discharge, phone calls and follow-ups, suicide screening, health literacy, and medication administration.
- The Gallup Service Unit continues to provide Nurse Advice Line services, which began on November 2, 2022. The Nurse Advice Line is a support service that patients can call to speak with a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By April 1, 2023, more than 3,000 calls were received.

Kayenta Service Unit, Arizona

- The Kayenta Emergency Department continues managing its human, financial and equipment resources in order to provide 24/7 emergency services for an area of approximately 750 square miles.
- After being closed or severely restricted during the pandemic, the Kayenta Outpatient Department (OPD) continues to regroup and reorganize. OPD leadership is working hard to address staffing challenges and establish the department as a certified Patient-Centered Medical Home in order to increase medical care accessibility and expand capabilities.
- The Kayenta HPDP Program has participated in the KSU Sexually-Transmitted Infections (STI) Task Force Committee meetings to help address the current STI outbreak. HPDP staff provided outreach education through the dissemination of educational handouts to all local service unit chapters and schools. HPDP also received a shipment of condoms for distribution at local chapter houses.

Four Corners Regional Health Care Center, Arizona

- The Four Corners Regional Health Care Center's outdoor COVID Car Clinic has been reintegrated back into regular clinical operations. Patients can call the clinic to schedule same day testing and/or vaccination. In 2022, the team tested 1,036 individuals through the car clinic. The car clinic administered 7,056 vaccines since December 2020.

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- The Four Corners Regional Health Care Center has established a weekly Veterans Support Group as part of an IHS initiative to improve access to care and services for veterans closer to home in a culturally sensitive environment. Meetings are scheduled every Wednesday from 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM.
- The Four Corners Regional Health Care Center Public Health Division collaborated with clinicians and the community to improve breastfeeding practices and support mothers. The breastfeeding promotion project is at 75 percent demonstrating that mothers are breastfeeding their infants. The Indian Health Service supports policies and practices that foster breastfeeding by minimizing formula and other liquids or solids during the first six months of life. Four Corners Regional Health Care Center has a designated lactation room in the clinic for staff and patients.

Shiprock Service Unit, New Mexico

- Clinical Director Dr. Ouida Vincent has spearheaded the growth and success of Shiprock Service Unit's clinical programs. Dr. Vincent has led a dedicated team to improve same-day clinic access, reduce wait times, integrate mental health services into clinical services, increase access to care for patients with high-risk diabetes, implement telehealth services, and hire more specialty doctors. As a member of the executive leadership team, Dr. Vincent has worked closely with other executive colleagues to establish a Level IV emergency trauma center, a Family Medicine residency program, an emergency geriatric medical program, and other specialty programs. During the pandemic, Dr. Vincent kept the following essential health services open to the community: emergency surgery, emergency dental care, high-risk chronic care (cancer, renal disease, etc.), infusion clinic, family medicine, internal medicine, prenatal care, rehabilitation, wound care, and optometry. Because of her dedicated leadership, SRSU maintained accreditation status by the Joint Commission and Patient Centered Medical Home certification. With shortages of highly-qualified clinical directors in rural areas, we thank Dr. Vincent for her dedication and vision for Shiprock Service Unit.
- In February 2023, the Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC) Traditional Healer gave educational sessions about Navajo traditional stories in the NNMC Hogan. In addition, he taught about Winter Solstice stories in December 2022. The Traditional Healer uses Navajo traditional philosophy to counsel patients, perform ceremonies, teach cultural presentations and conduct cultural activities. The SRSU permits Navajo traditional healing practices to supplement western health care practices. A ceremonial Hogan is located on the property of NNMC for traditional ceremonies, educational sessions, and cultural activities. These activities are open to all employees but their request to attend must be approved.

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

Chinle Service Unit, Arizona

- In The Chinle Service Unit has been recognized for successfully securing grant awards as well as for implementing the Zero Suicide Initiative (ZSI) and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) programs.
- The Chinle Service Unit Suicide Prevention Task Force received the Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention (SPIP) award to improve existing prevention programs, implement culturally congruent public health messaging, implement a crises intervention program, and to develop and implement a robust postvention program with wraparound services. As an initial step, CSU's Department of Health promotion and disease prevention held its first Suicide Prevention Stakeholder group, comprised of local organizational

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leadership (Navajo Nation offices, 501c3 organizations) in order to ensure that IHS services are meeting the needs of all CSU communities. Additionally, the Tsaile Health Center Health Promotion/Disease Prevention team collaborated with Dine College and Rock Point Chapter to install digital community messaging boards.

- The CSU Division of Public Health is partnering with the largest school district in the service area to strategically develop a plan to improve social, behavioral, and mental health services to the school-age population. This includes efforts to increase Teen Clinic services in addition to providing clinical support for our school social workers.

Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Health Center, Mexico

- The Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Health Center (DZHC) Pharmacy continues to advance its pharmacy practice with the adoption of new technology such as robotics and workflow software, which improve wait times and the overall patient experience. In addition, the department uses a Point of Sale (POS) system to improve medication management, customer service and revenue collections.
- The Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Health Center Infection Control Officer performed 477 observations of hand hygiene practices in the Outpatient Department, Laboratory, and Dental Departments. DZHC has maintained an average of 99.2% for hand hygiene compliance. The practice of hand hygiene is a simple yet effective way to prevent infections in healthcare settings and homes. The Infection Control Officer's daily mission is to educate and promote hand hygiene in the clinic.
- Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Health Center Public Health Nursing (PHN) program has collaborated with the Nageezi and Huerfano Chapter Houses to promote community health and disease prevention. The PHN staff visited the Chapter's Senior Center Programs to perform community outreach and distribute information on vaccination and other topics that would be beneficial to community elders.
- Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Health Center Optometry and Dental Departments teamed-up to host a Kids Vision and Dental Exam Day for a local school. This outreach provided dental and vision screenings and education materials. In addition, the DZHC Outpatient Department collaborated with Presbyterian Medical Services Roundtree Developmental Services to provide parents with information on early childhood intervention services.

Gallup Service Unit, New Mexico

- The Gallup Service Unit Division of Nursing developed a 2023 Recruitment and Retention Plan to outline activities focused on recruiting and retaining qualified nursing staff at the Gallup Indian Medical Center. The Nursing Division also worked on a Succession Plan with a focus on restructuring the division to ensure appropriate staffing levels to provide safe, quality direct patient care. This includes licensed Nurses as well as Nursing Assistants and Medical Support Assistants.
- The Gallup Service Unit Emergency Department implemented the "Registered Nurse Clinical Pathways Program." This program is designed to increase the skills of Registered Nurses with little to no Emergency Department experience. Five Registered Nurses completed the first consortium with more expected to enroll in this program.

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- The Gallup Service Unit Division of Nursing collaborated with local nursing programs to provide educational experiences for nursing students. Prospective students gained hands-on, direct care experiences. This initiative also serves as a recruitment mechanism.

Inscription House Health Center, Arizona

- The Inscription House Health Center acquired two ‘Operation Warp Speed’ trailers and intends to use them to free up office space within the health center. This, in turn, will free up patient care rooms. The overall objective is to improve services by expanding our footprint.

Kayenta Service Unit, Arizona

- The Kayenta Service Unit - Division of Information Technology (DIT) collaborated with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs IT Department representatives and upgraded cable management within the server room for the VA network equipment. The IT cabling and network equipment are now professionally installed and organized.
- Kayenta Health Promotion/Disease Prevention School Health Program collaborated with the Chilchinbeto Community School to offer a nine-session, evidence-based physical education & physical activity program utilizing the Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK) curriculum. This structured physical education program fosters a positive school environment by providing a coordinated package of highly-active sports curricula.

Shiprock Service Unit, New Mexico

- Fourteen Security Guards at Northern Navajo Medical Center took a two-hour online Crisis Prevention Institute de-escalation training course. A well-trained hospital security guard is better able to prevent and de-escalate hospital security incidents to maintain a safe environment. The security guards ensure the safety of patients, employees, visitors and protect the hospital property. The security guards provide a physical presence at the hospital, control access points and keep an eye on patient, visitors and staff entering and exiting throughout the day.
- The Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC) Medical Records Department collaborated with the Four Directions of Health Communications Office to create an instructional video to teach patients and community members how to access Personal Health Records (PHR) from any computer, tablet or smart phone. This enables patients to conveniently view their medications, immunizations, clinic notes, laboratory results and appointments.
- The Four Directions of Health Communications (FDHC) at Northern Navajo Medical Center uses social media to broadcast easy-to-make healthy recipes to encourage healthy lifestyles. So far, the FDHC produced two videos: one video on Chiilchin (Sumac Berry Pudding) and the other on Winter Stew. Both videos received positive responses from the community. Chiilchin is a familiar food among the community members and received over 6,000 views. The Winter Stew received over 300 views. FDHC uses newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, flyers, posters, social media to disseminate a wide range of health-related information.

Tsaile Health Center, Arizona

- Tsaile Health Center received a Resolution of the Lukachukai Chapter #36 in Support of its ten-year plan to establishing a new outpatient center within the Lukachukai Chapter.

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- Tsaiile Health Center Dental staff coordinated with Tsaiile Public School and Lukachukai Community School to bring in children for their dental care needs.

Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations

Navajo Area Office, Arizona

- The Navajo Area Indian Health Service Sanitation Deficiency System (SDS) listing of projects is reported to the Navajo Nation annually. The most recent report was dated February 3, 2023. The SDS report listed 264 sanitation projects totaling approximately \$682.2 million.
- The Department of Sanitation Facilities and Construction (DSFC) staff completed project planning documents for the Fiscal Year 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58) budgets that include \$128 million for Tier 1 Project Funding; \$19 million for Tier 1 Design and Construction; and \$4.2 million for Tier 2 & Tier 3 Planning, Design and Construction.
- In addition to the IJA funding, DSFC received \$2.69 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding for the delivery of potable water. DSFC staff is working on completing construction project documents.
- Indian Health Service is in receipt of a 105(l) lease proposal from Sage Memorial Hospital (Sage). Staff from the Navajo Area is consulting with staff from IHS Division of Engineering Services to review the lease proposal, which has the potential to provide significant additional facilities funding to Sage. To date, Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation is the only entity that has successfully entered into a 105(l) lease with the IHS.
- As the US continues to deal with the deadly epidemic of opioid use disorder, the Office of Tribal Partnership (OTP) is working with the Navajo Area Pharmacy Consultant and the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety to establish a Naloxone Memorandum of Understanding that would enable IHS to provide Naloxone and Naloxone administration training to Navajo Nation staff. The agreement is awaits final signature from the Navajo Nation President.

Chinle Service Unit, Arizona

- The Tsaiile Quarters Project was selected to receive \$21,500,000.00 in non-recurring expense funds (NEF) to construct approximately 30 new quarters and all required support infrastructure. The Program Justification Document for Quarters (PJDQ) and the Program of Requirement for Quarters (PORQ) show a total need of 98 new quarters needed to house staff of the Tsaiile Health Center. This project will help in the recruitment and retention of health professionals. An Engineering Services project manager has been assigned, and the project will is proceeding.

Crownpoint Service Unit, New Mexico

- The Staff Quarters Request for Contract is scheduled to be issued March 2024 with a contract to be awarded by December 2024 for a Design-Build Contract. Design of the Staff Quarters is anticipated to take

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six months from the time of contract award followed by actual construction. All work is scheduled to be completed by September 2026 – the same time the Health Center is completed.

- Crownpoint Service Unit (CPSU) had two Internal Medicine Residents from the Yale School of Medicine rotate through CPSU's ambulatory care and inpatient care units. It is CPSU's objective to train physicians with a generalist background in medicine who are eager to become change agents and provide rural healthcare in the rapidly-evolving healthcare system in which we work. We at Crownpoint provide our residents with a rural health care experience and demonstrate firsthand the challenges communities face regarding access to care while seeking continuity of care and patient satisfaction.
- As part of our commitment to strengthening our new nurse graduate program, Crownpoint Service Unit is now recruiting individuals who have completed their associate's degrees in nursing. As a strategy of choice, we devote our efforts to developing best practices that address skills proficiency, attend to the emotional needs of new nurses, and provide structured transition programs to improve clinical and cultural competence for new nurses.

Gallup Service Unit, New Mexico

- The Gallup Service Unit (GSU) was selected for a Quality Improvement Project. The Indian Health Service - Division of Innovation selected GSU's project entitled "Improving Quality of Heart Failure Care for Patients at Gallup Indian Medical Center". The purpose of the project is to evaluate the status of heart failure with low ejection fraction (HFREF), assess barriers to guideline-directed therapy, and develop a model for improving the number of patients on these therapies. Currently, Gallup Indian Medical Center (GIMC) has approximately 300 patients with this condition.
- The Gallup Service Unit (GSU) is a partner to the McKinley County Alcohol Taskforce Collaboration. The taskforce was formed to respond to the devastating effects of alcohol abuse in our community. Stakeholders from the Navajo Nation, City of Gallup, McKinley County, Schools and detox/rehab facilities comprise this taskforce.
- The Gallup Service Unit Health Promotion Disease Prevention Program collaborated with several organizations to provide wellness activities to local communities. These events took place at several schools and health fairs for the months of January 2023 through March 2023. Activities included exercise sessions, education sessions and line dancing. Approximately 399 community members participated in these events from the various schools and local chapters.

Kayenta Service Unit, Arizona

- Kayenta Service Unit leadership is happy to report that the Kayenta Health Center and Inscription House Health Center were awarded \$16,400,000.00 to design and construct two 19-unit apartment buildings (staff quarters units). The projects are funded by Department of Health and Human Services – Non-Recurring Expense Funds (NEF).

Shiprock Service Unit, Arizona

- The General Services Department at Northern Navajo Medical Center are delivering 26 Xerox machines throughout the hospital to ensure employees are able to print, scan and make copies. These services are

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essential to providing quality patient care. One critical daily mission of General Services is to ensure the medical departments and clinics have proper equipment and supplies to care for patients. The General Services Department is responsible for managing property, supplies, records (archive), the GSA motor vehicle fleet, mail and telephone operators.