

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

<b>Area Tribal Representatives:</b> Portland Area	<b>Federal Liaison:</b> Rena Macy
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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**

Western Oregon Service Unit (WOSU) clinical services remain at full access operational status. With the return of the Chemawa Indian School (CIS) students, WOSU staff are working to meet the needs of both the CIS students and community patients. With the end of the mask mandate for IHS healthcare facilities, WOSU leadership team will continue to monitor community transmission levels and update masking requirements as needed.

WOSU is committed to recruiting and retaining quality staff. The WOSU is proud to announce the selection of our new Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (APRN), Julie Keel, who comes to WOSU as an IHS Scholarship recipient. In addition, we are proud to announce the permanent hire of Justin Skinner as our Environmental Services Custodian and Dr. Kristi Knows His Gun, Psychologist. WOSU also hired two term positions with Cary Thomas, Public Health Nurse; and Dana Loring, Patient Registration. Currently, WOSU is recruiting for a Director of Nursing, Pharmacist, Medical Records Technician, IT Specialist, Clinical Laboratory Scientist, Benefits Coordinator, Executive Administrative Assistant, Purchasing Agent, Public Health Nurse, and Music Therapist. These job postings can be found at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov).

Fort Hall Service Unit (FHSU) has made great progress with empanelment efforts to assure continuity of care. The use of provider teams has been implemented and is going well. We expect the teams to be successful in building our medical home atmosphere.

FHSU is partnering with Portneuf Medical Center’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to increase provider and community knowledge of the services and processes within the NICU environment, to provide pre-natal education to families expecting complex birthing circumstances, and to reduce the number of babies affected by maternal substance use disorder.

The FHSU laboratory recently added an Ortho Diagnostics Vitros 5600 analyzer, replacing two aging and malfunctioning systems (Vitros 4600 and ECiQ analyzers). The new analyzer will reduce resulting times by approximately 30%; add or return several tests such as immunoassays to in-house resulting that were formerly sent to reference labs; expand our ability to do in-house prevention such as PSA (prostate-specific antigen) screenings; and reduce costs to the service unit by \$20,000 due to the reduction in service contracts.

Warm Springs Service Unit: CEO attended several of the NCC virtual conference sessions and in particular listened to the HR session. We continue to struggle in the Portland Area with HR recruitment. We have seen a good amount of Open Continuous positions posted and hope to fill some of our vacancies in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr.

CEO attended the NW Portland Area Indian Health Board Quarterly Board Meeting in January.

During the March 1st supervisor meeting, the CEO invited Dayle Tufti to provide an in-service and general information about the Joint Health Commission and our collaboration to support and build the best healthcare system possible for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Dayle spoke about the various components of the Annual Health Report, including program description updates and data to support our improvement efforts.

The CEO and Clinic Director continue to participate in monthly collaborative discussions with Three Rivers Rural Residency program development staff, including Dr. Jinnell Lewis, who is the program director.

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As part of the National Acquisition planning and improvement efforts, the Portland Area hosted an Acquisition Planning and Listening Session.

The CEO continues to participate in a monthly (1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month) COVID-19 briefing to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) Tribal Council.

Wellpinit Service Unit (WSU) CEO met with tribal council to provide updates on staffing and operations. Area intermittent, contract locum, and deployed officer providers/nurses/pharmacists are being utilized to fill in current vacancies. Full time lab staff has enabled us to reinstitute local lab services. We are currently recruiting for clinical director, supervisory nurse, registered nurse, pharmacist, nurse practitioners, custodian, and CEO.

The Yakama Service Unit (YSU) Healthy Heart Program coordinated with these Tribal programs: Wak'ishwi (SDPI), Nutrition, Tiina'wit (Prevention/Treatment), Behavioral Health, to provide a Go Red Conference/Health Fair (La'luts'ak) for the patient community. This was a health outreach effort in recognition of the Heart Health month of February.

February 1<sup>st</sup>, the YSU conducted a 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Diabetes Health Day offering: foot exams, Optos/JVN retinal eye images, blood pressure screening/monitoring, nutritional information, and ordering of needed routine labs. Three providers conducted the medical exams that included a physician and two pharmacists.

The YSU Public Health Nurse program conducted outreach patient education to students of the White Swan High School. There were sessions on STD education & prevention and on pregnancy & contraception awareness. The sessions were well attended. A request by the school district was for another session to be conducted in the future.

The YSU treated, immunized, triaged, and tested patients through the concern of a Tri-Demic in the fall/winter months concerning Flu, COVID-19, and RSV illness. YSU experienced a brief surge in cases in the winter months, but the number of COVID cases later lessened and the number of severely ill patients was not as high as prior surges in COVID cases experience by YSU patients.

Colville Service Unit (CSU): CEO, Colleen Cawston resigned, her last day was March 3, 2023. On March 6, 2023, Capt. Martinez, Director, Portland Area IHS, Michele Miller, Acting CEO and Darcy Epperson, Acting Deputy CEO met with the Colville Business Council Health and Human Services Committee to introduce the Acting CEO, Acting DCEO and hear their concerns

CSU Patient Experience Specialist sent out invitations for the Patient and Family Advisor Council (PFAC) meeting to be held April 5, 2023.

CSU Pharmacy department continues to provide Naloxone & EpiPens to Tribal first responders.

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

WOSU continues to set the bar high with quality and innovations. WOSU leadership is prioritizing strategic planning this year. As part of this process, all employees are participating in Strength Deployment Inventory sessions to focus on improved communication and effective team building. Additionally, the WOSU team is facilitating a Youth Advisory Council to engage our young leaders on opportunities for improvement within our system. These efforts will prepare us for a strategic planning session this summer to involve key stake-holders, partners, and our community.

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WOSU employees are continually advancing their knowledge and skill in the healthcare field. Team Orca recently attended a conference hosted by the American Academy of Pediatrics and Canadian Pediatric Society related to Indigenous Child Health in Tulsa, Oklahoma. While in attendance, team Orca learned best practices from Indigenous-led, culturally specific programs to optimize care for children and adolescents. This quarter a WOSU team attended an AAAHC-Achieving Accreditation training organized by the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, bringing Tribal and IHS sites together to collaboratively review accreditation standards and assist in preparation for survey readiness. It was a great networking opportunity for Tribal and IHS sites to support one another in delivering optimal patient care.

Lastly, On March 24, the WOSU laboratory earned 100% on their Commission on Office Laboratory Accreditation inspection, with no deficiencies. Additionally, the laboratory received the COLA Excellence Award and certification for complying with all essential and required criteria. This award signifies the commitment to performing quality patient testing and superior overall laboratory practices performed by the laboratory team. This achievement would not have been possible without the support of the Area Laboratory Consultant.

FHSU staff works closely with Tribal Health programs to jointly provide high quality services. Coordination continues with EHR enhancements including note template and order menu changes and additions to accommodate the evolving needs of healthcare as part of Tribal Health program restructuring.

Based on allowed participants, Fort Hall Service Unit sent a leadership team to the AAAHC – Achieving Accreditation Training in Spokane, WA. This training was helpful for survey readiness which translates to our work in providing quality care.

WSSU: WSSU CEO was selected to participate on the Portland Area Facility Advisory Committee and began orientation to support the recently announced Demonstration Project to build a Regional Referral Center in Puyallup, WA. This project aims to support referral services for all tribal, urban and direct service healthcare centers.

The CEO approved AAAHC training for the QA-Risk Manager, CD, DON and Acting Dental Supervisor as we approach our next accreditation cycle. The training was held in Spokane, WA

WSU sent CEO, Facilities Manager, and Risk Manager to AAAHC training. Chief Dentist became certified as a BLS trainer to allow us to locally facilitate this training

WSU CEO went to SPIP (Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention) collaboration in Spokane to develop a coordinated effort on dealing with increased suicidality for the Spokane Tribe community. This will be an ongoing effort over several years with grant funding.

The YSU expanded the offering of fluoride varnish to Medical Assistants in the Medical Department as a means to assist with dental access and reach patients requiring fluoride treatment. This was conducted with support and training from the Dental Department and staff.

The Yakama Service Unit continues to offer its Pharmacy Residency program. A selection for the next resident was made with an anticipated report date in August. Our current resident experienced a week at another service unit and we hosted the resident of the Warm Springs SU. The residency program has been well received and valuable in the recruiting of pharmacists for the clinic. A prior resident is currently employed as a full time Pharmacist. The pharmacist residents provide a good service to the clinic while receiving experience in the clinic care setting. It is hoped that the program will continue to lead to pharmacists interested in serving our community.

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Healthcare student experiences continue to be offered at the YSU providing exposure to our facility and operations to students who may become future employee candidates. Dental hosted a Dental Hygiene student who observed the YSU Dental Hygienist as part of her experience and studies. Pharmacy hosted two pharmacist students are part of experiential rotation.

CSU sent 4 staff, Clinical Director, Nurse Supervisor, Chief Pharmacist and Laboratory Supervisor to AAAHC training in Spokane, WA. Two staff are taking the RCA2 training to become trained in Root Cause Analysis procedures.

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

This quarter, members of the WOSU procurement team had an opportunity to participate in a Division of Acquisitions listening session. This allowed front line staff to provide feedback on areas of acquisitions to assure consistent supplies and services are provided to our patients.

Additionally, the WOSU nursing team participated in a clinical project to improve the inventory and stocking of medical supplies. This effort was focused on improving efficiency and eliminating waste, assuring that our patients' needs are always met.

The Western Oregon Service Unit kicked off the design phase of the School Based Health Center (SBHC) project. This \$15.5 million project specifically addresses a need for increased mental health services for youth at the Chemawa Indian School (CIS). This SBHC will provide a culturally supported space for Chemawa students to receive integrated comprehensive services such as public health, individual and group behavioral health therapy, and positive youth development.

The Fort Hall Service Unit received 2023 Health Facilities Project Plan approval for three projects: plumbing upgrades to replace backflows and fire sprinkler pipe; parking and concrete improvements; and medical records renovation, administration and meeting space reconfiguration.

FHSU has had representation in the planning of and exercise and annex discussions and will participate in the April 2023 Regional Readiness Rendezvous, a gathering of healthcare, EMS and emergency planning teams from across southeastern Idaho. This is the first time the service unit has participated at this level.

WSSU: Portland Area provided a two (2) day Supervisor Training virtual event to start the new year.

The WSSU CEO continues to work on the Modernization Phase 1 project. We are wrapping up the Design Development phase, which will lead to a solicitation package very soon.

The WSSU CEO participated in the HIT Modernization demonstrations held in February.

WSU CEO participated in Career Fair for high school students and provided education on health related careers. Many students showed interest and were provided resources to answer questions.

The Yakama Service Unit had a team represented at the training, Achieving Accreditation (AAAHC), offered by the NPAIHB. The attendees included our Infection Control Nurse, Deputy CEO, Quality Improvement Officer and Facility Engineer/Manager. This training provided good insight to the accreditation preparation process for these staff members new to accreditation in their current new roles.

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The YSU has two staff attending a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) training by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement as a means to expand that skill across the service unit. The RCA process is key to identifying what changes and improvements may be required with an issue that may arise in care, systems, or the facility.

The YSU had (3) dental staff and an Infection Control Nurse attend infection control training by 2023 OSAP Dental Infection Control Boot Camp. This was a means to provide expanded training to staff and to become aware of current standards of practice and best practices in use.

YSU continues to recruit to fill various vacancies at the service unit. During this quarter we have, with the support of the Area Office, been able to receive assistance by using deployed Commissioned Officers of the USPHS in our lab, pharmacy and vaccine clinic. Additionally, YSU was able to hire twenty-one staff members under the Schedule A authority to maintain our staffing level to continue to offer the level of services we have in prior quarters and maintain our COVID response. Key departments where these employees filled duties of vacant positions were in: Medical, Nursing, Pharmacy and Lab.

CSU is currently recruiting for CEO, Deputy CEO, providers, nurses, PRC Administrator, PRC referral and claims clerks, dental staff, lab staff, business office staff, custodial staff. We are also working with HR to bring on Schedule A hires. We are also backfilling key positions in Lab, Pharmacy and Medical with Locum services. As well as receiving assistance from Portland Area intermittent staff in Medical and Dental. We have hired a new Chief Dentist who will start seeing patients in June 2023.

CSU held fire extinguisher training for all staff. They also documented Two (2) code blue drills during this period.