

**Albuquerque Area  
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee  
FY2020 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Report  
April – June 2020**

<b>Area Tribal Representatives:</b> Mr. Donnie Garcia, The Jicarilla Apache Nation	<b>Federal Liaison:</b> RC Begay
<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>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Zuni Service Unit took advantage of new flexibilities associated with hiring processes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This assisted with increasing the labor pool to support the outdoor drive-through COVID-19 testing tent and in-house screening of patients and employees entering the facility (temperature taking/asking basic questions re: signs/symptoms) in order properly direct individuals.</li> <li>• Planning continued for an Emergency Modular Building at the Ute Mountain Ute Health Facility to address Influenza Like Illness and COVID-19 Infection Control measures within medical exam rooms and Dental Operatory Rooms.</li> <li>• OEHE Staff held Quarterly Institutional Environmental Health meeting with Service Unit Safety Officers, Facility Managers, Infection Preventionists and Quality Managers and extended support to the Area’s Quality Council for the provision of Quality healthcare in the Area’s IHS and 638 healthcare facilities.</li> <li>• The Santa Fe Service Unit mobile testing teams conducted community based events at sites located in the 8 constituent tribes community, performing over 1,700 COVID-19 nasopharyngeal swabs during April and May.</li> <li>• The Albuquerque Area IHS conducted a Virtual Tribal Consultation Session on Wednesday, June 17 with Indian tribes and tribal organizations in the region, with approximately 104 participants. IHS representatives gave an overview on the multiple sources of supplemental funding provided by the IHS to help Indian tribes combat and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Presentations also addressed how to develop Testing Plans as it relates to requirements of the Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act.</li> <li>• The Taos-Picuris Service Unit (TPSU) partnered with the State of New Mexico and Tribes to hold a mass COVID testing event for Picuris Pueblo and conducted weekly calls with Picuris leadership regarding COVID issues. The TPSU also hosted weekly calls with the Taos ICS team to address COVID issues and partnered with the State of New Mexico and Taos Pueblo Division of Health and Community Services for contact tracing and addressed needs of positive COVID community members.</li> <li>• The Albuquerque Area Service Unit (ASU) developed intra-agency partnerships between the Albuquerque Service Unit and Mescalero Service Unit, and between the Albuquerque Service Unit and the Acoma Canoncito Laguna Service Unit in order to provide Behavioral Health Services and assistance from the Clinical Applications Coordinator. ASU also actively collaborated and assisted 638 Tribes with pediatrician, optometry, behavioral health, medical imaging services and had regular communication with all federal and tribal sites within the Albuquerque Service Unit (Alamo, Isleta, Sandia, Santa Ana, Jemez, Zia, First Nations –Urban) at our monthly health board meeting. At this meeting each community gave an update on success stories or challenges within their respective clinic. There was free exchange of information among all participants, including requests for help or support services when needed.</li> </ul>	

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

- The Albuquerque Service Unit continued its efforts to recruit primary care and behavioral health providers to implement Agency healthcare access priorities. Leadership development and succession planning were activities implemented by the recently-appointed ASU Chief Executive Officer.
- The Governing Body reviewed, revised and updated the Ute Mountain Ute Facility's Strategic Plan. The Governing Body, Performance Improvement Committee, and Clinical Staff discussed the FEVS results and developed a plan for target improvement.
- The Chief Medical Officer led several Area Credentialing work group meetings focused on drafting a new Credentialing policy and scorecard for Governing Board approval.
- With regard to credentialing, the Albuquerque Area installed the MD Staff Credentialing and Privileging software at all federal sites and moved towards full implementation of this system to improve efficiency and safety while standardizing the process for all licensed clinicians.
- The Area Pharmacy Consultant assisted with configuration and provided guidance to all Area RPMS sites concerning proper TeleMedicine documentation, coding, and billing configuration and procedures to optimize billing practices.

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

- In March 2020, an Optometrist began his tenure at the Taos-Picuris Service Unit as part of the Service Unit's effort to increase patient access to quality healthcare.
- The Area Office of Environmental Health and Engineering continued to work with Division of Health Facilities staff and leadership to improve project service and facility operations support; actively contributed to the work of the Continuous Accreditation Readiness Program (CARP) Team.; collaborated with the Chief Medical Officer and DCQ staff with the Area's CARP Team to identify and perform numerous accreditation readiness activities. OEHE staff also continued to support the Area's healthcare facilities; and performed numerous TJC, AAAHC and CARF accreditation readiness and support activities in preparation for and during official accreditation surveys.
- In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, the Albuquerque Area met six of 26 GPRA measures. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on achieving GPRA measures due to the decrease in patient encounters in healthcare facilities.
- As part of succession planning efforts, Area and Service Unit IT Specialists in the Office of Information Technology continued to shadow a Senior RPMS IT Specialist to enhance their knowledge in various in-depth RPMS system processes. Knowledge-sharing and skillset development continues to occur among Telecom and security staff as well.
- Throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter, federal representatives, tribal leaders and health program representatives continued to participate in the M-W-F weekly conference calls organized by the IHS Incident Command Team. On these calls, tribal leaders were briefed on actions and coordinated efforts between IHS, tribes and state health authorities to mitigate and address persons and communities negatively impacted by COVID-19.