

**Billings Area
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 4th Quarter Report
April – June 2020**

<p>Area Tribal Representatives: Mr. Dana Buckles, Fort Peck Tribal Executive Board Mr. Lynn Cliff Jr., Fort Belknap Indian Community</p>	<p>Federal Liaison: Ms. Michelle Begay, Office of Tribal Programs, Billings Area Office</p>
<p>Goal 1: To ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people</p>	
<p>On May 21, 2020, the Indian Health Service announced the Purchased/Referred Care Service Delivery Area (PRCDA) for the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana in the Federal Register. This notice notifies the public of the establishment of the PRCDA for the Tribe in designating the counties of Blaine, Cascade, Glacier, and Hill in the State of Montana.</p> <p>On May 14, 2020, the Indian Health Service issued a press release to announce the expansion of Specialty Care in the Billings Area. The expansion of specialty care services will allow local providers to refer patients to see a specialist via a virtual clinic appointment in areas such as behavioral health, heart care, kidney care, pain management and more. The specialty clinic telehealth services will complement the emergency care telehealth services that are already available. The Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Fort Belknap and Fort Peck Service Units are now offering specialty care telehealth services.</p> <p>Fort Belknap Service Unit in partnership with the Big Horn Valley Community Health Center started a new pharmacy program, the service unit is now offering Medication Assisted Treatment.</p>	
<p>Goal 2: To promote excellence and quality through innovation of the Indian health system into an optimally performing organization</p>	
<p>The Fort Peck Service Unit White Buffalo Clinic project is currently under construction and will add 10,742 square feet of new healthcare space to the Fort Peck Service Unit. The project includes a renovation to the existing Verne E Gibbs Health Center directly adjacent to the new clinic. The new facility will allow the service unit to relocate the dental and optometry departments while doubling the number of operatories. The goal of the renovation is to incorporate the Improving Patient Care (IPC) model into the existing clinic while improving patient access.</p> <p>Fort Belknap Service Unit continues to recruit qualified health care professionals to increase access to services. The service unit hired two new employees, the traditional healer position will work with all departments and assist patients in accessing traditional care and a medical provider was hired for the outpatient clinics, which has increased access to services.</p>	
<p>Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations</p>	
<p>On March 30, 2020, the Billings Area Optometry Telehealth Program was implemented throughout the Billings Area to address the service gaps that came with COVID-19. The program provided patients the option to remotely connect with an optometrist to have their eyeglass prescription renewed, refill medications, and provided screening for ocular disease. Within the first month, there were 230 telehealth visits compared to 117 in-office visits.</p>	

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Northern Cheyenne Service Unit reviewed their current strategic plan with Executive Staff and department supervisors to identify areas where realignment is needed between the current vision and future requirements based upon lessons learned from the pandemic response.

Billings Area Office staff are participating in the Environmental Protection Agency Region 8 Workgroup to establish inter-agency tribal coordination on drinking water, wastewater, and solid waste issues in Montana and Wyoming. This workgroup has identified opportunities to leverage federal government resources to assist Tribes in providing safe drinking water and effectively managing wastewater and solid waste.