

Insert IHS Area Name
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 4th Quarter Report
April – June 2020

<p>Area Tribal Representatives: Chief William Harris, Catawba Indian Nation Lance Gumbs, Trustee Shinnecock Indian Nation (Alternate)</p>	<p>Federal Liaison: Vickie Claymore, PhD. Director Field Operations Ashley Metcalf, Director, Office of Tribal Affairs (Alternate)</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

The Nashville Area includes Federal Sites that do not have direct primary care and operate as PRC only sites, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Nashville Area initiated Request for Contracting Action (RCA) to increase the availability of COVID19 testing for our communities served by these sites. These services have ranged from utilizing nearby clinics to mobile testing units brought directly to the Tribal community. During the pandemic, the Area has also identified and utilized new methods of patient outreach and registration for our seven newly recognized Tribal Nations, each requiring mass registration of eligible citizens to begin utilizing IHS services. Staff from the Area and Richmond Service Unit, which provides services to all seven Nations, worked to mail out information outlining the process for registering with the Service Unit directly to tribal citizens, and have been registering patients by phone to minimize face to face contact. Utilizing these methods Richmond staff have completed registration, and as a result directly increased their access to care, for 484 patients.

The Richmond Service Unit successfully expanded access to care for the communities served by implementing pharmacy services for eligible beneficiaries through a Walgreens contract. Eligible patients were sent information overview on the new program and a pharmacy card that can be used at Walgreens. The Area continues to work to increase the vendors for pharmacy services to ensure that patients have a pharmacy close to where they reside.

The Nashville Area has worked to successfully onboard multiple positions at many of our Service Units, and continued actively recruiting for open positions this quarter. The Richmond Service Unit on boarded two community health technicians and is currently recruiting for additional technicians. These positions will be community based and focus on helping with COVID19 response and related issues including, contact tracing and mobile testing units. Lockport Service Unit continues working to recruit for a Substance Abuse Specialist to add to the Behavioral Health staff, to expand access and services for the community. Catawba Service Unit has announced and made selections for several positions, including: Community Health Nurse, Health Technician, Public Health Nutritionist. The position for Dental Assistant is expected to be filled next quarter. Unity Youth Regional Treatment Center focused on recruiting and filling vacancies for key positions. The YRTC successfully on boarded both a Substance Abuse Therapist and Nurse this quarter, and are actively in the process of recruitment and selection for the Clinical Supervisor and Teacher.

The Area previously reported that beginning March 23, 2020 the Area has collaborated to conduct weekly joint organization meetings with the United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. and Bureau of Indian Affairs – Eastern Region for a collective response and relief call for Area Tribal Nations. These calls have continued throughout the entire 3rd quarter and have been critical in ensuring broad consistent communication opportunities during the ever changing COVID-19 response efforts. All Area Tribal Nations are invited and attend these calls ensuring consistent messaging for both ISDEAA Contracting/Compacting and Direct Service Tribes within the Area.

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

Nashville Area Service Units are partnering with Tribes, States, and CDC to ensure testing for COVID19 is available. During the pandemic, Mashpee and Catawba Service Units have continued to provide dental, primary and behavioral health services mainly through telehealth services. Patients are screened and those needing to come into the clinic are brought in for services. Both sites also offer COVID testing to those having symptoms, have been exposed, or at high risk. The sites have also been providing testing as part of community surveillance efforts. Contact tracing is provided through the Service Units and there are increasing efforts to expand contract tracing and be trained through CDC. The sites have maximized telework for staff when feasible. Our other Area sites are able to offer testing through the Purchase and Referred Care program and contracts. Abbott ID testing is offered at both the Catawba and Mashpee Service Units, as well as at the Richmond Service Unit through the contracted mobile testing unit within the community and at Shinnecock Service Unit in the Nation's Health Clinic. Several of the Service Units have worked with the respective Tribe to ensure testing is being completed on Tribal employees as part of the Tribe's reopening plan. Mashpee Service Unit participated in Train the Trainer Contact Tracing Training provided by CDC. They have also worked with the Tribe to utilized hotels so patients that have been exposed can safely quarantine for 14 days. As well as partnering with the Tribe and a CDC team on a COVID-19 public service announcement project to be utilized throughout the community. To meet the PPE needs of Tribes and communities, multiple Area Federal sites were able to distribute gloves, hand sanitizers, masks, and Clorox wipes. The Area also completed distribution of infrared thermometers to all Area Tribes to support phased reopening of the workplaces for businesses and other essential workplaces.

Nashville Area is in the process of recruiting an Area Clinical Director who will be working directly with Area wide Service Unit medical staff to provide assistance and oversight to ensure quality health care at our facilities. This position will help to ensure standardization and implementation of best practices across the Area's federal Service Units.

In order to increase the monitoring of PRC referrals and the timely processing of them the Area developed and implemented a tool to help Service Units run specific reports from the RPMS data base. This data is submitted to the Area and reviewed by the PRC department to provide additional recommendations and technical assistance to continue to help improve the PRC processing of referrals.

Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations

The Nashville Area conducted several virtual meetings to provide training, guidance, and technical assistance to Area Service Units in the development of their pandemic plans, testing plans, and Re-opening plans. The reopening plans followed three phases and the focus in on services that can be provided in each phase. It also includes detailed instruction and training on ensuring surfaces/equipment is cleaned and maximizing social distancing in order to protect patients and staff. Testing plans focus on patients with symptoms, potential exposure and high risk patients. The plans also included community surveillance with a minimum goal of testing 10% of the community population. Plans were reviewed and approved through the Governing Body process to help ensure critical functions were maintained across all Service Units.

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To increase the efficiency of onboarding and to help new team members better integrate during COVID-19 the Nashville Area made adjustments in the overall onboarding process. The Area maximized use of telecommunications such as Adobe Connect and Skype with video to provide training and introductions. Additionally, presentations including pictures of staff help new employees get to know their team in a virtual environment.

To help increase revenue the Nashville Area Business Office is working with the Lockport Service Unit and Unity Youth Regional Treatment Center to set up third party revenue generation. This work includes helping to enroll providers and obtain CMS-Medicare certification/enrollment. Collections from the Nashville Area Centralized Business Office for our Federal Sites for this quarter are \$295,335.69. Collections are at an overall 62% of the FY20 Goal with Collections totaling \$872,105.71. Medicaid remains the top payer. There has been 7,493 Ambulatory visits including Pharmacy. The Business office continues to monitor collections and anticipate any changes due to COVID19.

Unity Youth Regional Treatment Center developed their Electronic Health Record (EHR) implementation team and has been meeting weekly to develop templates, policies, and protocols. The move will allow for more efficient monitoring of treatment services provided, standardization, and improved documentation.

To ensure transparency and promote lasting relationships with the Area's newly recognized Tribes being served by the Richmond Service Unit the Area has developed and implemented a regular communication protocol to share the fast moving updates regarding service development. This communication consists of a monthly email update highlighting all new hires announcements, current service and process updates, and long term service planning updates. This quarter these emails have included the announcements of the newly hired Administrative Officer, Community Health Technicians, and additional PRC technician. The Area has also continued to ensure vacancy announcements are shared with Tribal Leaders as soon as advertised to help ensure community awareness of open positions.