

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

<p><b>Area Tribal Representatives:</b></p> <p><b>Jonathan Nez, President, Navajo Nation Alternate – Vacant</b></p>	<p><b>Federal Liaison:</b></p> <p><b>Roselyn Tso, Navajo Area Director Marquis Yazzie, Federal Liaison</b></p>
<p>During this reporting period, the Navajo Area Indian Health Service (NAIHS) focused on Covid-19 activities with an emphasis to diagnosis, treat and recover. Navajo Nation has been significantly impacted by Covid-19, and the report summarizes the NAIHS effort to respond to patient needs, and the quality and safety of our health care team members. The NAIHS also worked extensively with Navajo Nation Tribal Leaders to improve the access to water Infrastructure on the Navajo Nation by using the data tracked through IHS Environmental Health data systems.</p>	
<p><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></p>	
<p><b><u>Navajo Area Office, AZ</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of NAIHS Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction and Homeowner Training, Projects NA-10-R44 and NA-10-Z12 – Jeddito, Arizona, 28 homes now have access to safe potable water and individual sewer facilities. The IHS Division of Sanitation Facilities Construction (DSFC) program constructed the new waterline and sewer facilities under Projects NA-10-R44/Z12, using IHS and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding. The project scope included construction of 8.4 miles of waterline, 28 house water service lines, 2 mainline pressure reducing valves, 7 individual septic tanks and drain fields, 1 individual sewage lagoon, and complete plumbing for 6 homes.</li> <li>• The Gallup Regional Supply Center (GRSSC), which manages the supply chain for NAIHS and for several health facilities within the Albuquerque and Phoenix Areas, has issued Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) items to combat Covid-19 pandemic and pushed out to the GRSSC’s customers within NAIHS and Albuquerque and Phoenix Areas, including federal, tribal PL 93-68 and urban health facilities. The GRSSC plays a major role in securing PPE items from regular vendors the Center has active contracts with and from the IHS National Supply Services Centers located in Oklahoma City, OK.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Chinle Service Unit, AZ</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to the pandemic Chinle Service Unit put many improvements in place to accommodate the patients so that some services can continue, i.e., Drive through Pharmacy, Plexiglas in place at many of the windows. Maximizing testing strategies and the overall volume of tests completed. Quickly addressed burgeoning outbreaks, expanded internal capacity, and established systems to address a surge of patients.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Kayenta Health Center, AZ</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Technology (IT) coordinated with the ICS Team and implemented the nurse hotline for public access and communicate with KHC regarding COVID-19 medical concerns and patient education.</li> </ul>	

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The telephone hotline includes a hunt group type of calling structure, an auto attendant pickup system, and voicemail features to leave messages. This service will continue throughout 2020.

- The KSU works to strengthen NAIHS program management and operations. Secure and effectively manage the assets and resources. The service units plan to meet a minimum of 2% of the user population to be tested each month beginning July 2020 and gradually increase throughout the fall of 2020. The KSU will move forward to perform own test at clinic by increasing staff, purchase updated laboratory Covid-19 testing equipment, acquire outside laboratory service, expand infrastructure to accommodate additional laboratory equipment, perform in-house serology service, acquire a mobile unit for accessibility of community testing and expand community outreach with Navajo Nation PHN, Navajo Nation CHR, HPDP, CDC and John Hopkins.
- Increase access to quality health care services. The introduction of the ILI clinic and drive-thru testing resulted in a decrease in time for two ED measures from Quarter 2 to Quarter 3: Check in to triage (decrease from 15 minutes to 11 minutes) and triage to room (decrease from 37 minutes to 24 minutes). Once ILI clinic is closed, the drive-thru testing will start.
- Inscription House Health Center (IHHC) is working diligently to decrease vacancy rates and improve community access to healthcare. Two permanent Dentists have been selected and are in the credentialing process. Two physician contractors came on board July 2, 2020 and contracts are set through December 2020. A nurse practitioner contractor has also been selected and offered a position. This will fill all the current vacant provider positions at IHHC. All the vacant nursing positions have been filled. Total permanent positions (94), contract providers (2), on-duty encumbered (65), pending hires (6), vacancies (21), COVID-19 temporary positions (1 encumbered) and four vacancies to fill.

**Gallup Service Unit, NM**

- Mr. Mark Alford, enrolled member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, has been selected as the new Chief Executive Officer for the Gallup Indian Medical Center. He has 20 years in healthcare experience holding leadership roles in a variety of healthcare settings. Mr. Dewayne Begay, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation has been selected as the GIMC, Chief Operating Officer, he will oversee the day-to-day operations. Ms. Nanette Tso, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, has been selected as the Chief Financial Officer, who will oversees the Business office, Finance, and Purchase Referred Care (PRC) to increase accuracy of financial planning and budgeting.
- The GIMC Site Selection held a meeting on July 15, 2020 to discuss the Title I Contract for the GIMC SSER Phase II, with the Navajo Nation. The Health and Human Services Committee proposed standing commit legislation 0413-20 supporting the selection of the Rehoboth site for the GIMC replacement project.
- The Tohatchi Health Center (Satellite) worked to recruit and retain a high quality workforce. Improved vacancy rate from 38% to 29%.

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**Crownpoint Service Unit, NM**

- The CPSU Team STEPPS Initiative on Navajo Medical Interpreter was accomplished. Ten (10) employees are now certified as medical interpreters. Departments can request for Interpreters through the hospital operators. They have updated list to rotate and call upon request.

**Shiprock Service Unit, NM**

- As of May 2020, the vacancy rate for medical and dental officers is 18.11%. Overall, the Clinical Division vacancy rate decreased from 17.85% in January 2020 to 16.14% in May 2020. Use of Direct Hire Authority enables and expedites hiring of qualified applicants
- The SRSU pharmacy set-up a curbside pharmacy service in the hospital parking lot that had “runners” to retrieve information from the patients’ while they remain in their vehicle and deliver the information to the Pharmacy and return to the patients’ vehicle with medications or other information.
- The SRSU collaborates with the Navajo Nation Health Command Operations Center, NM Department of Health, NM National Guard, Central Consolidated School District #22, NN CHR Program. NNMC Community Health supported 11 mass drive-thru COVID-19 community testing in SRSU. The SRSU supported the following volunteer groups came from across the country to support the SRSU/ICS response to the COVID-19 crisis: DMAT Team, Samaritan’s Purse, PHS officers, Brigham Women’s Hospital and University of San Francisco Hospital. Volunteers were nurses, a medical team, counseling staff, epidemiologists, and contact tracing staff. PPE training was provided to all.
- The SRSU Covid-19 testing has been provided at the following Navajo Nation Chapters and SRSU facility: Hogback Chapter (120 tests), Newcomb Chapter (170 tests), Red Valley Chapter (114 tests), Beclabito Chapter (120 tests), and Four Corners Regional Health Center (174 tests).

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

**Navajo Area Office, AZ**

- The NAIHS and IHS Headquarters hold calls twice per week with focus on improving water Infrastructure for the Navajo Nation. Project NA-20-TWP funded for \$5.15M will provide emergency transitional water points and repairs. The project MOA#1 approved July 14, 2020 includes eligible design, engineering, construction and support of a safe water storage program. The Water Access Mission Team #4 is currently working on the design and construction of watering points at selected Chapters.
- Navajo Area Quality Management is seeking an automatic quality software to assist creating an area-wide dashboard. Manual data submissions have been challenging process past several years, and will seeking an area wide contract for IFUs with OneSource.
- NAIHS expanded the HEAL fellowship program across Navajo Area, working with HEAL to establish public health and health career programs in the area for students. As a result, three fellows are part of the HEAL fellowship.

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- Service Units continue Infection Surveillance and report to CDC/NHSN quarterly.

**Chinle Service Unit, AZ**

- Healthcare Provider Employee Flu Vaccination Status. Data Source - NHSN and Webcidents. All service units exceeded 2018-2019 national average of 81%. Chinle Service Unit Flu vaccine rate has 9% decreased from 2019 to 2020 flu vaccine season.
- In response to the COVID-19, implemented improvements in place to accommodate the patients so that some services can continue, i.e., Drive through Pharmacy, Plexiglas in place at many of the windows.
- The Tsailie Health Center Facility Director, Dwayne Thompson will lead the Chinle Service Unit Master Plan acquisition process. Once completed will justify our facilities' expansion based on our demographics and also identify all of our 'real property' that will increase our capacity in our service area.

**Kayenta Service Unit, AZ**

- Continues to work to achieve PCMH accreditation for KSU and meet the IHS objective for certification by 2021. The service unit has identified care teams, team drivers and provide supportive initiatives to PCMH Team Leaders for KSU. Multidisciplinary Team with outpatient providers, nursing staff, HIM, Coders, Navajo Nation PHN, Quality Management, and Business Office. Weekly/monthly team meetings and develop policies and procedures.
- The Kayenta Service Unit (KSU) Incident Command Systems for Covid-19 established nine goals and objectives during this public health emergency. The goals focus on patient safety, implemented case management to follow up on patients who have been discharged from an inpatient status with Covid-19. The KSU implemented a newsletter to inform staff of ICS status and objectives. This will continue throughout 2020.

**Gallup Service Unit, NM**

- The Tohatchi Health Center (THC) assessed and adjusted to changing situation by implementing innovative solutions. Increase access to care for Pharmacy department with curbside services. Pharmacy Point of Care increased collections by 23% from last year.
- The Gallup Indian Medical Center (GIMC) Stat building final design and construction package was completed with approved signatures provided on July 10, 2020. The project is scheduled for completion by January 6, 2021. This facility will allow the GIMC to prepare and provide enhanced services.

**Crownpoint Service Unit, NM**

- The Crownpoint Service Unit (CPSU) initiated the 2020 Strategic update. The Mission, Vision and Core Values were reviewed and they will remain the same. The IHS Strategic goals and objectives have been incorporated, and the initial Dashboard has been developed. The plan includes how CPSU will achieve its mission through the three strategic goals.

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**Shiprock Service Unit, NM**

- Emergency Department has officially earned the designation of Level 4 Trauma Center from the state of New Mexico. This designation represents the culmination of a quality improvement journey that has taken the facility from high patient wait times to a top performing Emergency Department.
- As of May 2020, the vacancy rate for medical and dental officers is 18.11%. Overall, the Clinical Division vacancy rate decreased from 17.85% in January 2020 to 16.14% in May 2020. The CEO meets regularly with Division Directors and Supervisory Human Resources Specialist to ensure efficiency of the Service-Unit hiring process. Challenges remain and management continues to work with staff and system. The Medical Staff Recruiter works with the Clinical Director to identify high-priority areas. Nurse Recruiter provides information and assists applicants.
- Northern Navajo Medical Center dental employees assisted in the Shiprock Service Unit COVID-19 response and ensured patient and employee safety by setting up curbside pharmacy service in the parking lot. The dental hygienists and dental assistants answered the call to assist as “runners” to retrieve information from the patients while they remain in their vehicle. The runners deliver the information to the Pharmacy and return to the patients’ vehicle with medications or other information. With the help of the dental employees, the NNMC pharmacy service is efficient, convenient and patient-friendly.

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

**Navajo Area Office, AZ**

- The Area leadership established security contract for ISO site; Coding and billing collaboration with service units; providing waivers from CMS; and continued the incentive/onboarding process.
- The Navajo Area IHS enhanced its working relationship with Navajo Nation Epi Center to work together on data analysis, modeling, and following gating measures; the Chief Medical Officer co-leads the Covid-19 response of the Navajo Nation Command Center overseeing public health and medical care; and work with all tribal programs to support their needs during Covid-19 including Abbott machines, testing supplies and isolation placement of patients.
- Executive Leadership Support provided during Covid-19: Executive support of Emergency Operation Center; Shared information and guidance for clinical care; Support of the ECHO program and shared clinical care information for all of IHS; Oversight and monitored test supplies and test modalities; Provision of ventilators; Weekly updates to NAO employees
- NAIHS Service Units hold accreditation status from the Joint Commission and Center Medicare and Medicaid Services.

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**Chinle Service Unit, AZ**

- In the first 120 days of the Covid-19 Response the Chinle Service Unit created systems of 24/7 monitoring and response to address community, patient, and staff needs. Established response system for over 1000 staff members, provided leadership to staff via clear objectives, consistent communications, and leading by example.
- The Pinon Health Center employees are provided an opportunity to attend daily sessions on stress management provided by Chinle Hospital and the PHC Counseling Services are available for services for our employees as well.
- The Chinle Service unit addressed the enhanced risk of the Covid-19 Pandemic by creating a new supply chains for logistics established, financial oversight of over 20+ million dollars in CARES Act funding, and direct community education on services provided.

**Kayenta Service Unit, AZ**

- The KSU Incident Command System and Covid-19 Community Engagement collaborate with tribal organizations/ services in the development of community-based health programs that will increase awareness on COVID-19 preventive measures. Work with the local chapters in Kayenta, Dennehotso, Chilchinbeto, Shonto, Navajo Mountain, and Inscription House by providing hands on education and showing the community members of how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in public, in the household and among their family environments. Topics of education focuses on mental health and emotional wellness, drive-thru swab testing clinic, how to boost and keep nutritional and immune system in tack, and how to keep safe by utilizing face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, and keeping a social distance per the CDC guidelines. Ongoing throughout the public health emergency of 2020.

**Crownpoint Service Unit, NM**

- The CRSU plans to participate as a Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH): Surveyors during Mock Survey conducted by Joint Commission Resources in May 2019 indicated CPSU is ready for PCMH certification. Our goal is to become PCMH certified and recognized by December 2021. The Executive Committee will apply for PCMH with regular Joint Commission application this fall.
- The CPSU Emergency Room Systems (ERS) /Emergency Department Dashboard (EDD): 98% of Total Visit Duration are at or under the 120-minute benchmark; Time to Triage – The time to triage benchmark is 15 minutes. Improvement toward this goal which is currently at 45% from 41% at beginning of year, majority of “time to triage” fall within under 30 minutes at 51%. Majority (85%) of visits meet the benchmark of 45 minutes on Time to Medical Screening Exam.

**Gallup Service Unit, NM**

- The GIMC increase Behavioral Health support and resources for staff and community. Develop a revenue based business line. GIMC met with Avera Ecare July 14, 2020 and a follow-up meeting scheduled for week of July 21, 2020 to enhance telemedicine capacity.

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**Shiprock Service Unit, NM**

- To meet staffing levels, the SRSU employees were encouraged to sign up for at least one training to help out in areas of the hospital that needed additional support. The following training were provided to interested employees: (1) Basic Vital Signs for non-clinical staff to take blood pressure, temperature, respirations, pulse, etc.; (2) Online Food Handler to assist dietary with food services (passing meals, stocking, cleaning, and helping kitchen staff), and (3) Housekeeping & Environmental Services to assist with basic duties in the non-Covid-19 areas.