

**Portland Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 1st Quarter Report
October-November-December 2019**

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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

Objective 1:1 Recruit, develop, and retain a dedicated, competent, and caring workforce

The Western Oregon Service Unit (WOSU) has hired three Registered Nurses, one Certified Coder, and a Family Nurse Practitioner. Two of these new hires are IHS scholarship recipients. In addition, the HIM supervisor completed training to become a Certified Coder.

The Colville Service Unit (CSU) filled 6 positions, Chief Dental Officer, a pharmacist, pharmacist technician, an IT Specialist, a PRC Claims Clerk, and through Schedule A Custodial Worker.

To address the COVID-19 Pandemic the 5 Portland Area (PA) Patient Advocates have been trained as contact tracers through the John Hopkins certified program.

The Warm Springs Service Unit (WSSU) hired a Pediatric Dentist and eight (8) schedule A hires in response to our COVID-19 operational needs and patient support. Also, all medical staff attended telehealth training to support increased telehealth visit needs in response to COVID-19. Additional lab support was also hired through Emergency Hire and Schedule A authorities for our COVID-19 testing (Abbott ID Now Analyzer).

A Physician Assistant to replace a vacancy has been recruited and will start mid-August at the Fort Hall Service Unit (FSU). The Lab Supervisor position was recently filled by an existing Lab Tech, now creating a vacancy for the Lab Tech. A Pharmacy Aid emergency hire was brought on board to provide pharmacy curb-side pick-up services. This has greatly alleviated that duty for several other staff.

To meet the continued demands of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wellpinit Service Unit (WSU) has hired one (1) health technician and four (4) positions using the Schedule A Hiring (1 custodian, 1 medical support assistant, 1 billing technician and 1 laboratory/x-ray technician)

In June of 2020, the WSU advertised for one (1) supervisory nurse, one (1) medical support assistant referral clerk, one (1) medical support assistant receptionist, two (2) temperature screeners/contact tracers, and (1) health systems specialist.

The WSU's A/R tech completed medical billing training that will allow her to better support SU needs.

The WSU hosted an informal awards ceremony where five staff members who went above and beyond during the COVID-19 pandemic were provided time-off or cash awards.

The WSU CEO coordinated Active Shooter training with the Spokane Tribe of Indian Chief of Police to provide to SU staff.

**Portland Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 1st Quarter Report
October-November-December 2019**

The Yakama Service Unit (YSU) has hired 2 pharmacy aids (runners) who start this week and has 3 more pending background investigation. Pharmacy aids will assist pharmacy and medical providing traffic control, curb-side pickup of medications. This will allow optometry staff and two department managers to return to their normal duties and provide coverage for lunch and breaks

Objective 1:2 Build, strengthen, and sustain collaborative relationships

WOSU Behavioral Health program deployed positive youth development at the Chemawa Indian School under the BIE-IHS Behavioral Health MOU. This program has also partnered with George Fox University in an integrated Behavioral Health collaborative for primary care.

For WOSU this Quarter the primary focus has been to balance addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic while maintaining the health care to our communities.

The CSU attended the Colville Tribes March 14, 2020 meeting called by the Chairman of the Colville Tribes who on that day stood up the Incident Command for the Colville Tribes. This began the journey of development for the strategy to address all fronts to address the COVID-19 Pandemic. Daily attendance for the Incident Command for the entire Colville Indian Reservation. The collaboration included clinic changes, patient services for positive cases, policy development.

WSSU CEO has been meeting with the CTWS COVID-19 response team daily (M-F) since mid-March. These daily briefs have created a communication mechanism that allow for prompt planning and adjustments to our Incident Command System structure. We have a unified ICS, with the IHS team taking the lead on this health care response.

The FSU CEO and staff continue to meet with the Tribal Council and other Health Care Agencies on the Shoshone Bannock Reservation on a daily basis to provide updates on the response to COVID-19

The Yakama Service Unit (YSU) continues to meet with the Tribal ICS team on a weekly basis and has provided a SU Physician on the Tribal ICS Team.

FSU use of Skype Meeting technology is being utilized to continue vital Case Management, Medical Clinical and Medical Professional staff meetings in the wake of COVID-19.

The WSU implemented a patient advisory council, with the first meeting held in June. The committee provided valuable feedback that will lead to SU improvements

The YSU has established a Collaborative Agreement (CA) with the Yakama Nation to establish mutual aid during a public health emergency. This CA allows for an improved collaboration between our organizations to provide COVID-19 related health services, patient education, and other technical efforts.

The YSU received Yakama Nation Resolution T-083-20, authorizing establishment of the Yakama Nation Public Health Authority thus allowing the sharing of information to the Yakama Nation with regard to daily testing numbers and protected health information as requested by the Yakama Nation

**Portland Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 1st Quarter Report
October-November-December 2019**

Public Health authority for its public health activities related to COVID-19. YSU Physician has been assigned a collateral duty to serve on the Yakama Nation Incident Command as a medical advisor.

Objective 1:3 Increase access to quality health care services

The WOSU unit is currently in the process of renovating their Pharmacy, Lab, and Supply areas. This will expand these departments allowing for additional staff to support our medical home model.

The CSU reached out in March to the State of Washington and Colville Tribes benefits to discuss early refill for pharmacy services. This action afforded the clinic to assure patients would minimize exposure early in the COVID – 19 Pandemic by not having to pick up medications monthly. Clinical operations took a drastic change this quarter, by the limitation of entrance an occupancy to the Service Unit. Implementation of curb side triage, pharmacy delivery and patient visits were initiated. Telemedicine was explored and deployed to the clinics.

The Abbott ID Now analyzer is up and running to provide near same day results for COVID-19 screening at the FSU.

All 6 Federal Service Units have implemented curbside medication pick-up services in response to COVID-19 pandemic as a mitigation strategy.

FSU Optometry has been seeing patients for urgent/emergent eye care and routine care over the past month on a slightly limited basis, to account for the longer exam times and room/equipment disinfection between exams. Optometry also continues to extend/renew prescriptions where appropriate.

WSU has been working closely with PAO getting bid packages ready to send out to perform a TAB (test and balance) on the HVAC system to ensure proper air changes per hour. Also working on installing dividers and reconfiguring HVAC supply and return points to comply with CDC in Dental.

The WSU implemented a Revenue and Access Committee to increase collaboration among WSU departments and determine how to best increase revenue and patient access.

The WSU's patient advocate worked closely with the Senior Center to acquire telemedicine equipment that will allow our staff to provide certain virtual healthcare services to our senior population while also increasing access to care.

WSSU has focused a fair amount of attention to telehealth visits during the past three months as a result of our COVID19 response and to provide the best care possible, while limiting on-site visits to slow the spread of this virus. Prior to 3/16/20, we had zero telehealth visits, and as of mid-July, they completed 146 tele-visits and on average over the past 13 weeks, they are doing roughly 143.7 telehealth visits

The YSU has implemented several services in response to COVID-19, including curb-side delivery of medications, outside triage of employees and patients. Most recently we have implemented a self-swab drive through lane to increase the testing capacity of our SU.

**Portland Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 1st Quarter Report
October-November-December 2019**

The YSU has deployed the Abbot ID Now analyzer and the Cepheid GeneXpert analyzer which provide same day testing. All employees' tests are ran using the Abbot ID Now analyzer to allow employee to return to work on the same day as testing.

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

Objective 2:1 Create quality improvement capability at all levels of the organization

The CSU worked to stand up the telework capacity for both clinics in Omak and Nespelem. The team from the Service Unit tested and retested many elements to get it as user friendly as possible for the providers and patients. The Area IT, Property and Service Unit Purchasing to procure laptops to optimize the telework capabilities.

In collaboration with the IHS Division of Quality, WOSU hosted a CHEST training on Environmental Services. This was provided to all Areas to include federal, tribal, and urban programs. The training certified CHEST trainers to expand EVS standards across the agency.

FSU Improvement efforts continue with EHR user efficiency. COVID-19 note templates were created to support providers to document necessary items for telehealth/telephone visits. The new clinic (E8) Public Health Emergency was created to document outside screenings to ensure accurate data collection.

The WSU benefits coordinator has engaged in a QI project to review the insurance status of our active population of patients and assist patients with enrolling in Medicaid and other insurance as necessary

During our Mid-Year PMAP reviews, the WSSU CEO implemented an Element that was added to all Supervisors requiring the completion of the IHI Basic Quality and Safety Certificate.

The YSU in cooperation with the PA Epidemiologist started a PDSA designed around our self-swab testing lane.

The YSU with assistance from Dr. Weiser is working on using the Icare panel to collect testing data for reporting requirements.

Objective 2:2 Provide care to better meet the health care needs of American Indian and Alaska Native communities

With the new hire of two social workers and a psychiatric nurse practitioner integrated into primary care, WOSU has expanded mental health support to patients within the medical home model.

CSU exercised the Schedule A provision to recruit and bring on staff to support the COVID-19 added functions. It was imperative to assure that the Business Office was solid for the added elements of coding and billing in this time. Due to the added emphasis on Infection Control the Environmental Services needed added manpower to address the deep cleaning needs.

**Portland Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 1st Quarter Report
October-November-December 2019**

FSU use of telehealth/telephone visits are being utilized, including 60-day medication fills to reduce COVID-19 exposure and/or transmission. The COVID-19 hotline has been widely announced throughout the community and it is used regularly. Numerous COVID-19 screenings have been done for patient and staff. Developed comprehensive care pharmacy clinics to help with accessibility to health care and to help relieve burden of providers. This program is still in the testing phase before full implementation.

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, WSU clinic has modified the main entrance to screen all incoming patients. The waiting room has been reconfigured to comply with social distancing guidelines. All new chairs were installed that allow for better disinfection. Strict limit of patients in waiting room (10 max). Housekeeping staff has been increased by one full-time equivalent to allow for more frequent disinfection rounds.

WSSU Dental is undergoing a HVAC reconfiguration, in accordance with new CDC guidelines in order to keep patients as well as staff safer.

The WSU has received a new CBC analyzer and is now operational. The clinic staff is in the process of analyzing 200 blood samples to calibrate the reference range for our normal values (already tested 50% of the total required female and male patients).

WSSU has demonstrated effective use of telehealth visits to meet the needs of our patients and community. These visits are aimed at providing a mechanism to screen and assess via phone/video visit, then determine if the patient requires an in-person visit. They hope to continue using this method of visit moving forward, giving the patient another means of getting their health care needs met

Objective 3:1 Improve communication within the organization with Tribes, Urban Indian Organizations, and other stakeholders, and with the general public

WOSU leadership meets monthly with Chemawa Indian School leadership to collaborate on current issues, improved communication, and increased services for the students.

The CSU CEO meet daily with the Colville Tribes Emergency Operations Center, daily meetings with the Colville Tribal Council. Meetings with Lake Roosevelt Community Health Centers on approaches in the development and refinement of COVID- 19 testing procedures.

FSU Tribal Health and Human Services (THHS) staff have graciously committed to assisting IHS in serving as screeners at the patient entrance to the facility. From this collaboration, numerous hours a week are devoted to assisting IHS and serving our patients.

There has been coordination between IHS, THHS and the Shoshone-Bannock Community Health Center (the HRSA after-hours clinic) with contact tracing.

The WSU's CEO, clinical direct, public health nurse, and patient advocated participated in a virtual town hall event, hosted by tribal council, to answer COVID-19 related questions from the community.

**Portland Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 1st Quarter Report
October-November-December 2019**

The WSU created a Facebook Page to provide another venue of communication between the SU and the community.

WSSU created a visit data spreadsheet to track our COVID-19 response, including medical mobile unit visits (well visits), telehealth visits, nurse only, urgent podiatry, urgent dental and urgent optometry visits. Our visit data included no-show rates for each of the clinics. This data is shared weekly with our Area Office Quality consultant, and is provided to Area Leadership.

The YSU has included a Yakama Nation Tribal employee in their ICS meetings which provides the Yakama Nation Tribal Council with timely updates to our activities. Also, it allows us to make requests for supplies and equipment necessary to provide patient services outside of our facility. Most recently we have used it to establish a new partnership in which patients that have been tested at our clinic are referred to the tribe for further patient education, access to community resources and supplies.

Objective 3:2 Secure and effectively manage assets and resources

The WOSU has established a contract for a 10-year master plan. This is expected to be completed in September.

The CSU Executive Committee refined the FY 2020 budget for review and consideration in relation to the projected decreased revenue from the impacts of decreased patient visits. Development of CARES funding allocations submitted for review and consideration.

The FSU Optometrist and the Optometry Tech have been regularly volunteering to do patient screenings at the clinical entrance. Between them, they have been providing 20 hours/week of screenings. The Optometry Tech also regularly assists the lab in performing coronavirus testing.

The WSSU Dental Clinic will be install new dental chairs/delivery systems in October.

The WSU PRC office has submitted to PAO PRC several lists of old purchase orders that have been closed at the SU level for their use in closing PO documents in UFMS. Some of the lists submitted reduced the number of open PO documents by 50 – 75 per cent.

WSU PRC is utilizing prior FY funds for all of the purchase orders currently being generated. FY-2020 funding is currently dedicated to potential COVID-19 cases.

WSSU had their annual property audit and maintenance. In the process, it was discovered that our medical equipment list did not match the vendors list. WSSU team reached out to Area Biomedical support to better understand the differences. As a result, the SU and Area have a better workflow for future reference.

The YSU deployed several measures to ensure the safety of our employees working outside in extreme weather conditions. These include two air-conditioned mobile offices, one for pharmacy and one for medical, 4 carports to provide shade and two commercial misting fans to cool the ambient air temperature.

**Portland Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 1st Quarter Report
October-November-December 2019**

The Yakima Service unit has been utilizing optometry, dental, and maintenance/housekeeping employees to assist in outside operations. Their role has been vital in our COVID-19 response efforts, contributing over 120 hours per week in our outside operations for traffic control, pharmacy curb-side delivery and patient triage/testing.

Objective 3:3 Modernize information technology and information systems to support data driven decisions

The WOSU has partnered with the Portland Area (PA) to pilot an improvement collaborative database. The objective is to improve transparency, shared efforts, and best practices.

The CSU deployed all available resources to the medical floor to maximize the ability for telemedicine. With COVID – 19 CARES funding, laptops were expedited to be ordered for telemedicine. The CSU CAC led a team for the development of the templates needed for telemedicine. The CSU and DCEO participated on an ECHO call focused on telemedicine.

The CSU along with the Area Director were excited to share the advancement of the Colville Tribes Joint Venture project.

The FSU facility received 5 laptops in July to be set up to allow for video capability for telehealth visits.

WSU Pharmacy worked with IT to enable electronic prescribing of controlled substances in-house and also enabled the automated upload of local controlled substance data to the state PMP database

The WSU has procured thirty-seven (37) new computer workstations to replace old, outdated equipment. Set up and distribution of these workstations will occur in the next quarter. This will also allow all users the ability to utilize dual screens in their medical and business functions if desired.

The WSU has procured twelve (12) new WYSE Thin Client terminal workstations to replace outdated existing units in each exam room and treatment area. Once the impending fiber upgrade to the facility occurs this will facilitate faster access times, speed up patient/provider times throughout the care process, and allow for improved access to imagery in the exam rooms as well as other feature upgrades. Set up is scheduled to occur in the next quarter.

The WSU has procured additional RAM for its Electronic Health Record server to see if it will increase the speed, capability, and function of our terminal server. If notable benefits are experienced then we will plan on purchasing additional RAM for these purposes.

The WSU has completed the process of updated new computer terminals to Windows 10 with full deployment expected by mid-January.

The YSU has secured 10 laptops and several I-Phones to allow employees to perform essential duties at home. Because of this we are able increase our contact tracing capabilities to help decrease the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

**Portland Area Indian Health Service
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2020 1st Quarter Report
October-November-December 2019**
