

**Billings Area  
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee  
FY 2023 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Report  
April – June 2023**

<p><b>Area Tribal Representatives:</b> Nizhoni Friesz, Tribal Councilwoman Northern Cheyenne Tribe</p>	<p><b>Federal Liaison:</b> Jennifer LaMere, Director, Office of Tribal Programs, Billings Area</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>IHS Director Roselyn Tso</b> visited the Billings Area in June 2023 as a part of the IHS leadership tour for 2023. Throughout the week, she had the opportunity to meet with several tribal councils and health care facility leadership teams to speak on our shared commitment to ensuring all facilities are actively meeting the needs of the tribal communities they serve. She toured several health care facilities across Montana to see the great work being done to raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.</p> <p><b>Billings Area Office of Healthcare Programs</b> held a Community Diabetes and Nutrition Best Practices Learning Workshop for Special Diabetes Program for Indians, Health Promotion Disease Prevention, Community Health Resources Programs and IHS care partners on June 6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup>. The workshop included best practices and community based approaches for Diabetes and Nutrition. The Montana DPHHS shared resources and provided information on technology application opportunities and demonstrated nutrition bingo for education. On June 8<sup>th</sup> the Billings Area held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Registered Dietitian Business Meeting which included a review of registered dietitian services, program policies and educational plans.</p> <p><b>Blackfeet Service Unit</b> Community Outreach/Community Engagement Events April-June 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STI Education at Browning High School and East Glacier Park School</li> <li>• De La Salle School sports physicals with Villanova Nursing Students</li> <li>• Blackfeet Community College Health Day – Diabetes Management, Nutrition Education</li> <li>• Blackfeet Wellness Community Run - Diabetes Management, Nutrition Education</li> <li>• Blackfeet Kids Day - Diabetes Management, Nutrition Education</li> </ul> <p><b>Blackfeet Service Unit</b> Dental Clinic staff provided oral screenings, dental sealants and fluoride varnish applications at Blackfeet Early Childhood Centers and reservation schools. The Dental Clinic also opened access for walk-in availability for children to receive fluoride varnish applications.</p> <p><b>Fort Peck Service Unit</b> in partnership with the Roosevelt County Health Department coordinated a presentation to the staff at the Verne E. Gibbs, Chief Redstone and White Buffalo Clinic on the Safe to Sleep Campaign. Preventative information included reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep related infant deaths. Discussion included updated CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations and statistical data for medical providers.</p>	
<p><b>Goal 2: To promote excellence and quality through innovation of the Indian health system into an optimally performing organization</b></p>	

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**Little Shell Service Unit** had their onsite survey in June 2023 and became the seventh Service Unit in the Billings Area to achieve accreditation from The Joint Commission with Primary Care Medical Home (PCMH) certification. Accreditation validates our continuous focus on improving patient safety and clinical quality for all patients.

**Billings Area** – The Joint Commission Accreditation (TJC). As of July 2023, all federally operated Indian Health Service facilities in the Billings Area are accredited by The Joint Commission. In last 18 months, we have successfully completed seven TJC onsite surveys. To accomplish the goal, we used multidisciplinary staff to assist with mock surveys and tracers and had onsite support from Area Office staff before, during and after the surveys.

**Little Shell Service Unit** underwent a clinical laboratory inspection on June 15<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the inspection was to determine if laboratory services meet the conditions for certification as set forth under 42 CFR Part 493 of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA). The laboratory inspection resulted in zero citations for a perfect inspection.

**Billings Area Office of Quality** is offering monthly Lunch and Learn Continued Accreditation Readiness sessions throughout 2023. Topics in April – June included using TJC’s accreditation guide to maintain survey readiness, leadership skills to foster a system wide focus on quality and creating and using Tracers.

**Billings Area Office of Quality** is offering monthly Lunch and Learn PCMH sessions throughout 2023. Topics include empanelment to primary provider, innovations in care coordination and addressing social determinants of health through connection with community resources.

**Billings Area** continues with the **Pilot Floating Leadership Team**. After successful handoff of leadership to the new Director of Nursing (DON) and Quality Nurse at the Fort Peck Service Unit, the Floating Leadership Team DON and Quality Coordinator are providing onsite leadership, mentoring and support at the Crow Service Unit. The Floating Leadership Team Chief Executive Officer continues to provide leadership to the Little Shell Service Unit. The success of the program has led to needing additional nursing leadership support, and the Billings Area Office is working to hire another nursing leader to the team.

**Blackfeet Service Unit** had 12 Montana State University Bozeman Cultural Immersion Nursing students placed throughout the service unit June 20 – 23, 2023 to observe cultural care.

**Fort Peck Service Unit** in collaboration with the Tribal Head Start Program provided Head Start Screenings (immunizations and vaccinations) to over 36 children in July at the local IHS Clinics. The local pediatrician, clinic providers, public health nursing and nursing staff focused their resources and efforts to ensure all of the Head Start children were served.

**Fort Peck Service Unit** Pharmacy Department in collaboration with Ohio Northern State University secured 16 pharmacy students through its preceptorship program thus far in 2023. The Fort Peck Service Unit pharmacy staff possess extensive skill sets to mentor the professional doctoral candidates (4-5<sup>th</sup> year pharmacy students) at the both Verne E. Gibbs and Chief Redstone Clinics.

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

**Billings Area Office of Environmental Health & Engineering** conducted Facility Operations Program reviews of the Fort Belknap, Northern Cheyenne, Blackfeet and Fort Peck Service Units. Program review reports were submitted to the Service Unit Chief Executive Officers and Facility Managers with recommendations for program improvements.

**Blackfeet Service Unit** 14-Plex Housing Unit and the **Fort Belknap Service Unit** 2-Duplex Housing Unit Construction Projects are currently under construction. The housing projects will address the housing shortages in an effort to assist with recruitment.

**Billings Area** Indian Health Service and Tribal Health Program Pharmacy Leaders met for an Area Pharmacy Leadership Meeting in June 2023. Topics included ambulatory care antimicrobial stewardship, IHS Principal Pharmacy Consultant updates, recruitment and retention, informatics, commissioned corps updates, acquisitions, quality, policy alignment, clinical billing, Patient Centered Medical Home, tele-health medication assisted therapy (MAT) services and pharmacy integration in the ED.

**Billings Area Purchased Referred Care (PRC)** staff and Service Unit PRC Managers met on May 2, 2023 in Billings for a Vendor Orientation/Training and PRC Staff Meeting. Vendors from Montana and Wyoming participated in the annual PRC Vendor Orientation/Training and discussion. Topics included: what is PRC? Vendor reports, dental vendors, no patient liability and a presentation from the Fiscal Intermediary (FI). The Billings Area PRC staff continued with a two day session which included PRC reports and compliance.

**Fort Peck Service Unit** established a new Transportation Pilot Program in partnership with the **Crow Service Unit** in order to enhance its current transportation operations. The goal is designed to provide priority services for chronic complex patients both locally and off the reservations. The plan addresses the targeted group, GSA vehicles, updated electronic scheduling, appointments, and Medicaid reimbursement.

**Fort Peck Service Unit** is leading in coordination efforts of a local housing expansion project. The goal is to work in tandem with the Fort Peck Tribes' and other interested agencies to expand housing availability for health care professionals. The action plan includes continued collaboration with the Tribal Health Department, housing plans, building site and construction contracting.

**Fort Peck Service Unit** PRC Program is disseminating educational packets to increase knowledge of the PRC process and to provide awareness and educate patients on notifying PRC for the authorization of payment for referred services. The Service Unit staff are also working with the Billings Area Office in establishing an educational phone line for patients/vendors to call in for notifications.