

**Great Plains Area  
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee  
FY2023 4rd Quarter Report  
July to September 2023**

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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**

Weber Report “A Focused Retrospective Review by Integritas Creative Solutions (ICS), of IHS Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse, A Medical Quality Assurance Review” January 2020. After a review of the information shared from the Indian Health Manual Part 7 Human Resources Administration and Management, it is found that the IHS has a process in place to review suitability when someone is hired. However, it is difficult to determine from the information provided if the IHS is being proactive in holding their supervisors and leadership accountable for situations like Weber. The ICS report found many issues with those who managed the Weber situation. How are these supervisors that were involved now being held accountable? And how are any new individuals being trained to deal with Weber situations? The policies provided address how someone is hired and their suitability is evaluated. But it does not address how supervisors are held accountable when they pass along an employee such as Weber. The ICS Report cited multiple root causes that were associated with management and supervision. The ICS report also noted failures in the credentialing process that allowed Weber to go without further investigation by the IHS. The ICS report provided some recommendations. Were all or some of the recommendations implemented? The ICS report mentioned a policy that was developed in 2019 concerning sexual abuse of children by health providers. Could this policy be reviewed with the DSTAC and can the DSTAC get all of the changes that were made, why they were made, and how they will help prevent another Weber situation? This will help the DSTAC clearly see what the IHS has done to correct the flaws that allowed the Weber situation happen and allow the DSTAC to ask questions and provide input and support.

In July 2023, the Rosebud Hospital was recertified by the Joint Commission. The Lower Brule Health Center was also recertified by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care.

Great Plains Tribes continue to advocate at many levels the need for Behavior Health Services. At locations such as the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Hospitals funding seems to contribute to the need. Transportation of Behavior Health patients to a higher level of care is a burden on Ambulance Programs and PRC budgets. Transporting these patients by air is costly and impacts the Service Units ability to fund lower priority PRC referrals.

Great Plains Tribes find transportation as a challenge. Older operating budgets such as what exists at Rosebud and Pine Ridge have limited resources to transport patients when referred off the reservation. This becomes more challenging the further they are referred away from home.

The Great Plains Area continues to seek solutions to lack of funding for Emergency Medical Services throughout the Area. In 2021, the IHS reassumed the program from the Oglala Sioux Tribe who was struggling financially with the program. Other programs throughout the Area report similar challenges.

Area Tribes report challenges with Dental staff shortages. This often results in lack of services.

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

Weber Report “A Focused Retrospective Review by Integritas Creative Solutions, of IHS Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse, A Medical Quality Assurance Review” January 2020.

There is a need to improve the Budget Formulation process in the Great Plains Area. There is a need to be transparent and ensure the goal of the process is understandable. There is a need to be timelier with scheduling and sharing of information. More specifically, more time is needed to have meaningful conversations about the budget with the tribal leaders to ensure agreement and true collaboration to optimally provide the most effective and efficient public health services and an optimally performing organization.

There is a need to better understand how Service Units receive their annual budgets. What formula is used to determine the need and how is it met?

The Area continued to expand the collaboration with the Boston Children’s Hospital to provide pediatrics care throughout the GPA facilities. Began with Eagle Butte about 18 months ago, recently started working at Belcourt, looking to expanding beyond that this year

The Area is currently working with CDC Epi-Aid and the State of South Dakota to address the syphilis epidemic. The work being done includes the implementation of rapid syphilis tests.

The Pine Ridge Hospital established agreements with multiple reservation schools to provide Behavior Health Services within the schools. The Hospital is currently working on additional agreements with the schools and local Juvenile Detention Center to provide Behavior Health and other school-based services.

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

Permanent Chief Executive Officers were hired at the Rosebud Hospital and Wagner Health Center. The Pine Ridge Hospital recently hired a new surgeon and obstetrician. The Eagle Butte Hospital recently hired a new hospitalist. The Area Behavior Health Office hired a new Director.