

**Portland Area IHS
Direct Service Tribes Advisory Committee
FY2023 4th Quarter Report
April – June 2023**

<p>Area Tribal Representatives: Greg Abrahamson, Spokane Tribe of Indians Andy Joseph, Conf. Tribes of Colville Reservation</p>	<p>Federal Liaison: Rena Macy, Portland Area Office</p>
<p>Goal 1: To ensure that comprehensive, culturally appropriate personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people</p>	
<p>Chemawa is committed to recruiting and retaining quality staff. The Western Oregon Service Unit (WOSU/Chemawa SU) is proud to announce the selection of our new school-based Psychologist, who will provide clinical counseling services to Chemawa School students. In addition, WOSU hired an additional Art Therapist, who will provide behavioral health therapy by means of creative expression and visual art media to Chemawa students. Chemawa also hired two term positions; a Pharmacy Student Extern; and a Dental Assistant. Currently, WOSU is recruiting for a Clinical Nurse, Health Technician (CMA), Dental Assistant, and Clinical Laboratory Scientist. These job postings can be found at www.usajobs.gov.</p> <p>The entire Chemawa staff was able to complete their Core Strengths SDI (Strength Deployment Inventory) 2.0. This tool gives each employee a strength assessment about who they are and how they relate to others. Moreover, this measures each individual’s core motives, how they experience conflict, their strengths, and strengths that are overdone which limit interpersonal effectiveness. The objective is to build trust and form productive relationships within our Chemawa team. It strengthens the ability to communicate with each other and most importantly our patients.</p> <p>Warm Springs Service Unit (WSSU) CEO reports that the National Combined Council of CEO’s put forth HR recruitment as one of two priorities to HQ’s leadership. The second priority put forth was Acquisition staff and process standardization. WSSU hosted a meet and greet with Dr. Austin and Alex Peterson, who are currently providing dental services in Maupin, and would like to explore opportunities with the CTWS and WSSU.</p> <p>WSSU executive staff approved the pharmacy alternative work schedule to continue at this time. Data from the staff satisfaction and access to care were provided and evaluated. This evaluation will continue periodically with data to support the alternate work schedule.</p> <p>WSSU CEO and OEHE team met with the Tribal Council on May 15th to present the Design Development progress report of the Modernization Phase I project. We requested a new lease agreement, which will be reviewed by TC for consideration and implementation. The CEO also notified the TC that via the Joint Health Commission a request for Land Use permits has been started for the land to south and west of the current campus. This land will allow for a 2nd entry that will be dedicated to Drive-up Pharmacy and shipping/receiving, as well as emergency vehicle access improving our parking lot safety for staff and patients.</p> <p>The Yakama Service Unit (YSU) under the work of the Patient Experience Specialist initiated a meeting of the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) and has conducted two such meetings. There are representatives of the patient community and of the service unit on the committee to discuss aspects that can improve the patient experience at the service unit. The initial meetings have identified some signage and information distribution that can improve the understanding by patients of the services the service unit offers, and how best to access the services.</p> <p>The Yakama Service Unit is working through their phone system routing tree to improve the patient experience. The phone system is a key factor in access to care for our patients. The team is working to address potential changes that are possible with the newly installed replacement phone system. There are</p>	

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several departments that are part of the team. The primary focus of this effort is the access for patient medical appointments and patient communication from the clinic. However, contacting other departments and services of the clinic will be addressed as well in the phone tree. The proposed changes to the call flow will be presented to the Yakama Service Unit PFAC to gain input from our patients.

The YSU continues to work to develop the staffing of the service unit. A recent example, is expanded functions training a few of the Dental Assistants attended in Parker, Arizona. This is the second cohort of Dental Assistants to be sent to expanded function training in that department. This provides a good method to support staff development to meet staffing needs and expand care access.

The YSU was able to hire experienced staff in this past quarter:

- Added a nurse to Ambulatory Care Nursing team. Additionally, have hired an experienced Health Technician to assist the ACN team.
- Hired two pharmacists who have both been previous pharmacist residents at Indian Health Service facilities. One of the hires was our latest pharmacist resident who recently completed her residency program at the YSU. The residency program has been beneficial to recruitment and staffing. With these two recent hires we will have recently hired three pharmacists to our staff.
- We have expanded the schedule of one of our Physicians to a full-time schedule. She is experienced and provides quality care as demonstrated in her prior work under a temporary schedule.

Colville Service Unit (CSU)

- Newly hired PRC Administrator onboarded May 21,2023. PRC program working on increasing communication opportunities with patients and vendors.
 - Exploring expanding PRC referral services – top 3 are Bariatric Surgery, Alcohol and Drug treatment, Orthodontics
- Dental Review with Area office Consultant completed in June 2023.
- New JVN (Joslin Vision Network) equipment installed and JVN imager trained in June, with first round of patients scheduled for July.
- Acquired a “Dexter X-ray Training Mannequin” from the Yakama Service Unit in order to train dental assistants on site. Training dental assistants on-site in order to build staff size of dental clinic.
- Posted dental hygienist position for hire.
- Connecting with Roberta Bearcub at CCT-TERO to train tribal members to become dental assistants.

Wellpinit Service Unit (WSU):

- WSU hired a new supervisory nurse and pharmacist positions which have been vacant for some time.
- A CEO was hired after several years of being vacant and individuals in acting roles.
- Currently recruiting for nurse practitioners, clinical director, custodian, health technician, PRC clerk, and Public Health Nurse.
- Front desk staff are managing the Patient Experience questionnaires for ongoing input from the patients we serve to help us ensure our patients are receiving great care. Staff received praise from GB for the numbers obtained how they managed the distribution.
- Medical Records staff have obtained access to two more sites where they can easily access patient records for ongoing medical care. The medical records purging project is now complete, all the records have been shipped.

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Fort Hall Service Unit (FHSU)

Building on the joint AAAHC accreditation with the Tribal Health, the FHSU staff have worked very close with Tribal Health programs to improve Medical Home related projects. Improvements have been made with empanelment and medication reconciliation that will enhance quality of care.

With short staffing FHSU has been creatively addressing patient's needs by increasing utilization of nursing standing orders and RN case managers to assess patient's needs before referrals outside the facility are considered. As the team looks forward to August and September there will be additions of an MD and PA to complete two provider teams which will increase access to face-to-face healthcare for patients.

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

The Chemawa acquisitions team was able to begin closing Undelivered Orders (UDOs). With the help of the Portland Area Office Chief Contracting Officer and Contracting Officer, Chemawa's Acting Purchasing Agent has been able to work and clean up past contracts. Processing of these UDOs will release funding from obsolete contracts to be utilized elsewhere for clinic operations. Additionally, the WOSU Leadership Team has prioritized the Purchased Referred Care (PRC) Committee. This multidisciplinary PRC Committee is tasked with the development of local processes, provide oversight, and assure compliance of the PRC program. Moreover, this team is identifying opportunities to provide additional services to our student patients.

This quarter, our Facilities Supervisor, with the Portland Area Property Management Officer, completed the annual property inventory review. This annual inventory review increases property accountability and assures accurate records of clinic assets. Over 500 individual items worth over \$1.6 million were reviewed and accounted for throughout the clinic.

The WOSU is in the middle of the design phase of the School Based Health Center (SBHC) project. This \$15.5 million project specifically addresses a need for increased mental health services for youth at the Chemawa Indian School (CIS). This SBHC will provide a culturally supported space for Chemawa students to receive integrated comprehensive services such as public health, individual and group behavioral health therapy, and positive youth development.

WSSU CEO is working with the Joint Health Commission to secure additional property for our Phased Modernization projects. Currently, an additional Land Use Agreement is needed from the tribe to build a separate driveway for our drive-up Pharmacy. The Warm Springs new school-based clinic is ready for occupation. Dental and medical services are planned to begin to the 509J K-8 academy during the 2023-2024 school year. This is a joint effort by Tribal Community Health and IHS.

The WSSU CEO started a Contract Officer Representative (COR) group meeting to discuss acquisitions related topics and provide support. This is a learning environment, with shared information and collaboration. The WSSU nominated 12 individual Director Awards and 2 team award. These nominations have all been awarded and were recognized at the August 3rd – Portland Area Director's Recognition of Excellence for work performed in 2022.

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Several WSSU teams/departments participated in the Annual Pi Ume Sha health fair (1st since the end of the PHE). The health fair was a huge success with more than 800 community participants and vendors from all across Oregon. WSSU Purchasing Agent has recently been trained and authorized to use the PRISM purchase order system. This will help improve our ability to make timely purchases to meet the needs of our organization. The purchase cardholders and purchasing staff are meeting with Budget to approve requisitions and monitor department spending on a weekly basis every Friday. This is in an effort to ensure Pcard reconciliation is happening, purchases are approved and quality is built into the process.

The Yakama Service Unit has recently installed WiFi connectivity within the clinic. The service is currently available to programs of the clinic and has facilitated use of audio/visual capabilities for meetings of large groups at the clinic. This WiFi connectivity will provide the capability to improve information gathering and sharing with patients within the clinic. The opportunities that this technology and related information technology equipment will provide is exciting to consider. In the future it can positively impact telehealth capabilities, information gathering methods and patient interaction.

The YSU continues to Beta test software changes with the Office of Information Technology. This quarter the service unit tested the RPMS patch for Immunization Tracking, patch 26. In the recent past, the service unit has tested patches to the Business Office RPMS package as well. This provides the users at the service unit an opportunity to view and affect the anticipated software changes that are forthcoming. Input from our IT staff, Clinical Applications Coordinator, and Business Office is appreciated.

Colville Service Unit (CSU):

- Implemented new PRC Program Coverage schedule. Increasing patient education on the PRC process. Training staff detailed staff on PRC duties. Hired New PRC Administrator on 5/22/23.
- Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) meeting established in April 2023. The PFAC is a place for patients and family members to share information and feedback on services, processes and forms at the clinic. Shelli Martinez Caldwell facilitated the meeting, with 3 community members joining for a very productive meeting. The main focus of this initial meeting was customer service and patient education with suggestions on how CSU could improve in both these areas.
- CDR Micah Woodard was detailed for 60 days from Western Oregon Service Unit (WOSU) to assist with AAAHC preparation and quality improvement projects.
- Equipping clinic to be able to provide Root Canal Treatments on site.
- In process of adding O'Brien Dental Labs as the dental lab for crowns, bridges, partials, etc.

Wellpinit Service Unit (WSU):

- WSU dentist became trainer for BLS and has provided training for staff and community members.
- Lab has developed an inventory system to track supplies which has decreased shortages and interruptions in patient care.
- Benefits Coordinator is updating her patient eligibility and education quality improvement project. To enhance the clinic process to include care coordination with other departments throughout the clinic and ensure patient education of those processes. This project will include updating the Patient Information Handbook, still planning on other education project. The PAO

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Director brought this up in GB, there needs to be more patient education on our processes, what we do and why, what services we have. I assured him we are already working on these issues.

- Our other quality improvement project is in planning and will consist of “Coordination with Benefits Coordinator”. We want to ensure each patient without an alternate resource has contact with our Benefits Coordinator to communicate and/or sign up on Medicaid. We are working to enhance our processes to ensure an optimal level of care.

FHSU staff works closely with Tribal Health and Human Services Department to jointly provide high quality services. Coordination continues with EHR enhancements including a note template and order menu changes and additions to accommodate the evolving needs of healthcare as part of Tribal Health program restructuring.

The FHSU is implementing the use of RN case managers to its provider teams. This has enabled more efficient care coordination, timely reports and follow up, as well as improving patient and staff satisfaction.

Goal 3: To strengthen IHS program management and operations

A longtime Chemawa employee and Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) was admitted into a Registered Nursing program and will begin her studies in the Fall. WOSU’s Risk Manager and Acting Director of Nursing completed a post-Master’s graduate certificate in patient safety and quality. In addition, Chemawa’s Acting Clinical Director completed a point-of-care ultrasound hands-on training with the Association for medical Ultrasound at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in Portland. This training will allow the Chemawa Medical Team to expand services offered and provide point-of-care ultrasound services.

The teamwork, collaboration, support, drive, willingness, and dedication of this team is second to none. The Chemawa Clinical Team received a Portland Area Director’s award for their care provided to the Chemawa Indian School students. Throughout the pandemic, this devoted team spent countless hours mitigating COVID-19-related challenges and developed evidence-based responses to testing, treating, and providing high-quality care. They also collaborated with the BIE to coordinate care services for students while minimally disrupting academic services. Furthermore, the Chemawa Laboratory Team received a Portland Area Director’s award for providing high-quality care; passing their COLA inspection with zero deficiencies; and receiving the COLA Laboratory Excellence Award. The Chemawa Lab staff work tirelessly every day to provide the highest level of care possible for our patients. We are very fortunate at Chemawa to have such an excellent lab staff and they are very much appreciated.

Chemawa continues to set the bar high with quality and innovations. For FY24, the Chemawa leadership is prioritizing strategic planning. To compliment the SDI workshop, Chemawa Leadership Team wrapped up the clinic-wide 360-degree review sessions. These 360 sessions were conducted with the Chief Executive Officer meeting with each department to receive feedback on what is working, what is not working, and what to continue. WOSU staff recently completed the Federal Employee View Point survey and will be provided with additional opportunity to provide feedback to the Chemawa Health Center itself. Leadership will compile all of this information as input to be applied during strategic planning sessions to develop Chemawa’s Strategic Plan.

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The WSSU CEO sat in on the Quarterly Property & Equipment meeting April 12th. The staff were encouraged to finalize palletizing excess property for disposition and shipment to UNICOR. WSSU collaborated with the Area Office Business Office Consultant for an On-Site survey. We are awaiting the final report, however, it was reported to the CEO that no major findings will be documented and on-going improvement with staff training will be encouraged.

After many months of delay, WSSU now has the use of our Wireless infrastructure to help support direct and indirect patient care at our facility. Additionally the equipment requested to support a new IDF closet in POD C to support and resolve ongoing connectivity issues due to the distance the connection travels to the servers. We plan to have contractors on-site in July to start the implementation.

The Yakama Service Unit completed their annual property inventory in a brief time period coordinating with the Property Officer, Portland Area Office. The Property Custodial Officer planned out the work efficiently in advance and implement the use of barcode scanners made available by the Portland Area Office. This technology and the ongoing work by the Property Officer has improved the efficiency and thoroughness of the annual inventory process.

The YSU phone system was replaced this quarter to maintain continuity of the system as the prior system was due for replacement. There are some aspects that continuing to be improved. The new system is a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) system. A few features have improved access to paging. There are learning aspects occurring with the new system. Through the dedicated work of our IT Department and that of our Area Office, the phone system was set-up and made operational for the over 120 employees of the service unit comprised of Tribal programs and I.H.S. operated programs. The work was done primarily over the weekend to minimize disruption for our patients.

The YSU Accounts Receivable team of the Business Office has aided the Colville Service Unit (CSU) with posting of accounts receivable transactions. This has assisted that service unit while they work to re-establish their business office team in the AR section. Conversely, the CSU has shared with the YSU some best practice documents related to Patient Registration and standardizing the process. This will assist the YSU with further development of our Patient Registration staff. The team environment amongst service units transfers best practices and is appreciated in the Portland Area.

Colville Service Unit:

- Detailed non-PRC Staff to assist in working the PRC backlog & UDOs. 2 staff (1 day a week) and 1 staff (4 days a week)
- IHS Clinic Leadership, Michele Miller, Acting CEO and Darcy Epperson, PRC Administrator, met with Colville Business Council-Health and Human Services committee monthly to update the tribe on clinic activities and PRC
- Environmental Health Services (EHS) Site visit completed. Reviewed both Clinics, Nespelem & Omak, for infection control and EPA controls as well as completing site surveys for both. One deficiency was noted for Nespelem regarding sterilization process. Three small deficiencies were noted for Omak.
- VA annual QA site visit with Kim Waller, VA Rural Health Coordinator
- Governing Board meeting took place June 2023

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- CEO and DCEO positions interviews took place in May 2023. DCEO was selected with EOD of 8/14/23. CEO Position being re-advertised closes 8/23/23.
- Working with HR to fill positions. Current vacancy rate is 52%
- Minimizing time-sensitive processing times for dental PRC referrals through immediate detailed responsive communication.
- Scheduled for Dentrax Update in October, 2023.

Wellpinit Service Unit (WSU):

- WSU had our annual training/team building event. Training was provided to ensure that all staff have knowledge of how to operate basic devices in emergency scenarios. Team building activities and awards were also critical component of this event.
- WSU has provided business office and PRC support to the Colville Service unit through in person and virtual assistance.
- Business Office Manager continues to attend internal and external stakeholders conference calls, meetings, and trainings to enhance the tools necessary for effective management of the revenue generation process and HIM operations. Always looking for new technology or innovative tools to improve our efficiency and increase revenues.
- Staff recognition-praise your staff, staff awards (Celeste Kieffer just received her Area Directors award), develop and sustain team approach, continued trainings

FHSU has nominated many individuals for the PAO Director's Awards. These well deserving staff have continually gone above and beyond to meet national and facility standards. From housekeeping to nursing, facilities to administration, our professionals have put in long days and countless hours to assure the facility is running optimally. Meeting the demands of day-to-day operations gets challenging however our dedicated staff have stepped up and succeeded in providing quality care to the patrons of the FHSU.

Benefits Coordinator has participated in many activities to assist, enroll and provide patients with updated information. There have been several health fairs since the announcement of the PHE ending. Education regarding PHE and Medicaid Unwinding has been provided with patient registration duties as well. PBC also is participating in a project assisting Department of Health and Welfare to get new clients on Medicaid as well as, re-evaluations and redeterminations. Monthly phone calls to clients who have been disenrolled from Medicaid has been ongoing. A week-long display was presented in the patient reception room to inform patients about the importance of enrolling and maintaining health insurance. Ongoing efforts are being established as we find new ways of providing education and outreach to our community.

The Business Office teamwork is in close collaboration with our Tribal Health co-workers as a dedicated team to Advance Native Health.

Fort Hall Facility Improvement Projects collaboration with the Area Health Facilities is ongoing regarding the life safety sprinkler system and facility grounds pavement and sidewalk fixtures.