

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE
PORTLAND AREA
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (DEHS)

Core Services

Environmental Health & Safety Survey/Public Health Inspection

DEHS staff conduct routine monitoring and surveillance of environmental conditions through consultative, risk-based surveys to assess the environmental hazards and identify potential pathways of human exposure. Survey reports identify problems and present recommended corrective actions. Decreased risk factors lead to reduction in injuries and illnesses.

Construction Plan Review

Construction plans are reviewed by DEHS staff to ensure they address local requirements (or best practices) and protect environmental quality and public health. Facilitation of a successful program to review facility site plans will provide the tribe with the ability to ensure that requirements and best management practices for operation and maintenance are adequately considered.

Program Evaluation

DEHS staff review facility and program health and safety plans to ensure they address local and federal requirements. Assess the quality and effectiveness of programs and activities against evidence-based criteria, with tribal input, and implement improvement plans where needed.

Surveillance & Investigation

DEHS staff control and prevent adverse health events resulting from communicable diseases and outbreaks; chronic diseases; environmental health hazards; biological, chemical, and radiological threats; and large-scale disasters. Community health problems and hazards are commonly identified through a referral system. In partnership with other IHS staff and local/state health departments, DEHS staff investigates epidemics and/or individual human disease cases. Surveillance data provide information which can be used for priority setting, policy decisions, planning, implementation, resource mobilization and allocation, and prediction and early detection of epidemics. Disease surveillance is thus a critical component of the health system since it provides essential information for optimal health care delivery and a cost-effective health strategy.

Policy/Code Development

DEHS serves as a primary resource to guide local, state, and federal public health policies and plans regarding the American Indian population. All government and organizational policies, codes, or ordinances should convey individual health promotion and protection measures. Tribes should have an effective compliance and enforcement program that is implemented consistently to achieve compliance with regulatory requirements and public health standards.

Community Environmental Health Profile

The DEHS will facilitate a comprehensive health planning process that engages the community in identifying, prioritizing, and solving environmental health problems. The Profile provides a

comprehensive, professional interpretation and assessment of environmental conditions in tribal communities. The results of the report provide a “diagnosis” with an understanding of the community's health status and ensure that the community's priorities consider specific health status issues. This report can be used by tribal leaders and program staff to make informed decisions for environmental improvements or government program quality improvements where needed.

Training & Health Education

Health literacy, including an understanding of the concepts and terms related to environmental disease and injury prevention, helps people take actions and adopt healthy behaviors that reduce the impact of disease and injuries. DEHS staff provides training and ensure culturally-appropriate and consistent environmental health education is provided to individuals and the community. Operator training ensures federal and tribal facilities maintain compliance with requirements and regulations.

Systems Management

DEHS is a professional program with high morale and motivated people. Staff have increased abilities to respond to changes and new developments, can apply innovative strategies, and provide quality products. Enhanced credibility with stakeholders and improved customer accessibility to health services and information create a better educated and aware customer base. Program priorities and services are based on continuous improvement and customer needs. Tribes receive equitable levels of service. Service is uniform and high-quality. Program has an established quality assurance and improvement process and the ability to measure the program against national criteria. The process identifies program elements that may require improvement or be deserving of recognition. Program functions, services, and activities are aligned; program performance is aligned with personnel performance. Improved utilization of manpower and processes maximizes management of available funding and other resources. Support research to define effective approaches to environmental health activities and develop an evidence-based DEHS program.