

2024 Strategic Planning Report



Collaborating from vision to action to serve the urban American Indian and Alaska Natives of Montana



Table of Contents

- Introduction 3
- Meet the MCUIH Staff 4
- Vision, Mission, and Values 5
- Summary of Early 2023 Site Visits 6
- Needs for the Organization 7
- Strategic Initiatives, Objectives, and Goals 8
- Future Growth and Opportunities 9
- Meet the Clinics 10
- Acknowledgements 11



Introduction



The Montana Consortium for Urban Indian Health (MCUIH)

is a partnership of healthcare providers who apply a cultural lens to healthcare in order to improve the well-being of American Indians and Alaska Natives. As a collaborative force representing Urban Indian Organizations (UIO), the consortium thrives on the strength of partnerships and interconnectedness. MCUIH identifies, secures, and provides training, resource sharing, advocacy, technical assistance,

and funding opportunities to uplift UIOs in Montana. As a result of MCUIH's work, consortium members can extend their benefits to the broader communities they serve. The consortium was founded in 2021 and has five member organizations across the state: All Nations Health Clinic (ANHC) in Missoula; Indian Family Health Clinic (IFHC) in Great Falls; Butte Native Wellness Center (BNWC) in Butte; Billings Urban Indian Health and Wellness Center (BUIHWC) in Billings; and Helena Indian Alliance (HIA) in Helena.

The consortium educates project partners, elected officials, government

agencies, and other stakeholders on challenges and opportunities in the healthcare field impacting Urban Indian populations. This report highlights the importance of strategic planning in optimizing MCUIH's support for UIOs, fostering sustainable growth, and, ultimately, improving healthcare outcomes for the urban Native American communities in Montana.

Our staff members from MCUIH are looking forward to seeing the progress that can be achieved through collaboration and support among all UIOs in MT.

Meet the MCUIH Staff



JASON SMITH | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the Executive Director of the Montana Consortium for Urban Indian Health (MCUIH), Jason Smith is a dedicated leader in public service. With a Bachelor's in Business Entrepreneurship, he has passionately championed the integration of tribal voices into critical state policy. Jason's tenure as the former Director of Indian Affairs for Governor Steve Bullock showcases his collaborative and flexible leadership style. Committed to fostering effective communication and understanding, he shapes MCUIH's initiatives with a philosophy centered on engaging stakeholders to enhance community and business interests. Jason, a catalyst for positive change, brings a well-rounded perspective to the organization, finding inspiration in activities like hiking and listening to podcasts.



TOMAS MAES | PROJECT DIRECTOR

Leveraging his extensive expertise to drive impactful initiatives. Armed with a Master's in Strategic Studies and a Bachelor's in Environmental Health, Tomas has seamlessly navigated roles as a military officer, health inspector, and safety consultant. His notable career showcases exemplary leadership skills, adept problem-solving, critical thinking, and precise budget management. Tomas's military background underscores his commitment to discipline and strategic thinking, qualities that greatly contribute to the success of MCUIH's projects. Beyond his professional achievements, Tomas is a devoted father to triplet daughters. During his cherished free time, he prioritizes moments with his family, engaging in activities that create lasting memories. An enthusiastic hunter and fisherman, Tomas, alongside his wife, explores new destinations, embracing the adventure and camaraderie these pursuits offer.



ALEX POTTER | OPERATIONS SPECIALIST

As the Operations Specialist at MCUIH, Alex brings a wealth of expertise in healthcare coordination, team leadership, policy implementation, and meticulous attention to detail. Her robust skill set includes exceptional communication skills, proficient bookkeeping, and efficient time management, making her a valuable asset to the organization. In her previous role at Billings Clinic Broadwater, Alex showcased her adept ability to manage deadlines, budgets, and multifaceted responsibilities with finesse. Her analytical approach and commitment to excellence have consistently contributed to the success of operational endeavors. Alex proudly calls Townsend, MT home, where she finds joy in spending quality time with her two boys and beloved dogs.



LISA JAMES | DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Lisa James, Director of Development at MCUIH, holds a Bachelor's in Business Administration and boasts over a decade of healthcare expertise. With an extensive background in healthcare management, program development, and project coordination, Lisa has played integral roles in various positions within the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. Her accomplishments include successfully managing diverse healthcare programs, negotiating contracts, conducting policy analysis, and fostering interdepartmental collaboration. Lisa is recognized for her adept leadership in cross-initiative work, reviewing state and federal rules, and engaging stakeholders. Beyond her professional accomplishments, she finds joy in watching her son play basketball, indulging in the tranquility of ice fishing, and creating lasting memories through camping and travel adventures. Lisa James brings both professional acumen and a personal passion for community development to MCUIH's mission.



Vision, Mission, and Values

VISION:


A partnership guided by Montana Urban Indian Organizations through a cultural lens to enhance the lives of the American Indians and Alaska Natives we serve.

MISSION:

Represent the unique needs of Montana Urban Indian Organizations and their communities through interconnectedness, resource sharing, and advocacy, with a commitment to sustainability.

VALUES:

 **M**aking a Difference

 **C**ulture, Compassion, Collaboration, Courage, Communication

 **U**nity

 **I**nnovation

 **H**onesty, Humor, Health



Summary of Early 2023 Site Visits

Following extensive site visits to each UIO in early 2023, crucial recommendations were compiled, shaping the strategic direction for MCUIH. Workforce development and stable funding emerged as pivotal factors for success. The need for a comprehensive review of Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems over the next 3-5 years was underscored, emphasizing the importance of achieving alignment among different systems.

Data sharing and standardization through a dashboard were highlighted. Pharmacy feasibility studies for UIOs,

exploration of the 340b program, and negotiations with insurance companies were identified as key areas for improvement.

Concerning healthcare services, creating space for dental services at various clinics, along with necessary policies and funding, was identified as a priority. Cultural services and community integration emerged as a common theme, prompting efforts to create cultural committees and expand spaces for cultural activities.

The establishment of policy committees, development of a master

calendar of events, and exploration of legal service sharing for cost reduction were recommended strategies. Building partnerships, particularly with tribes, was emphasized, highlighting the significance of trust and relationship-building for unity and progress.

These recommendations collectively form a comprehensive roadmap for MCUIH's future initiatives, ensuring a holistic approach to urban Indian healthcare.

Needs for the Organization

Key themes emerged as clinic leadership and staff explored issues, priorities and challenges facing their clinics. These themes will serve as a foundation for addressing the identified focus areas and guide future actions and initiatives.

CLINIC	DESCRIPTION OF NEEDS
ANHC	Training: Cultural practices and philosophy; More collaboration; Transportation: Car, van, truck, shuttle; Share pharmacy best practices. Website: allnations.health
BUIHWC	Training: Policy and procedures, integrated framework; Connect with other UIOs; Funding for more staff and resources; Best practices with providers and business operations. Website: billingsurbanindianhealth.org
IFHC	Capacity building; Cultural competency training; policies & procedures; capital campaign for facility expansion; Various medical services support; best practices with leadership titles and growth. Website: ifhcgf.org
HIA	Connect with other UIOs; MOU or in-house pharmacy; Dentistry; Mental health counseling; IT support; Cultural sensitivity training Website: hia-mt.org
BNWC	Build trust in the community; Increase Native presence; Cultural competency training; Legal and financial assistance; Data collection and grants support; More providers; Behavioral health program Website: buttenwc.org

MCUIH has prioritized the needs and guidance of UIOs, recognizing that MCUIH's role is not to develop programs but to fill gaps and assist with the barriers UIOs face in their communities. MCUIH serves as a collective voice for UIO executive directors while advocating for the needs of consortium members and urban American Indians in Montana. As MCUIH builds capacity by adding staff, the strategic plan will provide clear guidance to the staff for the years ahead. The plan will help navigate challenges, guided by the principles of responsiveness and collaboration, ensuring that efforts align closely with and informed by the evolving needs of the UIOs we serve.



Strategic Initiatives, Objectives, and Goals

Three strategic initiatives – fundraising, workforce and data – emerged as priorities in the near future for MCUIH leadership during the strategic planning process.

WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

- Secure diverse funding for workforce development.
- Launch a targeted program to address strategic workforce needs and recruit a dedicated Workforce Specialist.
- Standardize policies, position descriptions, and HR templates across UIOs to identify shared opportunities and best practices, fostering effective recruitment and retention.
- Provide leadership, HR staff, and employee advancement training to ensure professional growth and excellence.

PHILANTHROPIC AND GRANT ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE

- Identify and facilitate access to diverse funding sources for each clinic to ensure financial sustainability.
- Pursue collaborative grant opportunities to strengthen the financial foundations of the organization.
- Advocate for and seek unrestricted funding to support clinics' flexibility and autonomy, ensuring strategic financial independence.

DATA SOVEREIGNTY AND HEALTH DISPARITIES INITIATIVE:

- Establish a centralized repository for gathering and analyzing health disparities data, enabling informed decision-making.
- Recruit and train a Participatory Research Board, ensuring Indigenous-led representation and insights.
- Leverage the Participatory Research Board to guide future programming, offering perspectives on needs and opportunities, and ensuring Indigenous voices are central to research within UIOs and MCUIH.

ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES:

- External policy advocacy
- Provider cultural awareness training
- Internal policy development
- IT/billing/coding assistance and inter-clinic collaboration
- Communications support
- Service development (Pharmacy, Dental, etc.)
- Partnerships with Tribes, Federal and State partners
- Expansion of urban services to other locations (satellite offices)



Future Growth and Opportunity

MCUIH is committed to supporting each clinic to improve care and enhance patient respect. In addition to the three strategic initiatives outlined, MCUIH board members have identified additional objectives:

ADMINISTRATION & HUMAN RESOURCES:

- **Policies and Procedures Standardization:** Develop a repository for standardized templates, allowing the UIOs to implement consistent and efficient policies and procedures across clinics quickly.
- **Board Training:** Provide comprehensive training opportunities to empower MCUIH's board with enhanced governance and leadership skills. Extending the training opportunities to UIO boards.
- **Professional Resource Sharing:** Establish programs for staff exchange among clinics, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- **Technical Assistance:** Offer specialized technical support to address clinic-specific challenges and enhance overall operational efficiency.
- **Development of Training Materials:** Create resources and materials to facilitate ongoing training and skill development among clinic staff.

- **Standardizing Health Records:** Creating standard health records systems across all clinics would improve data consistency and accessibility. Recently, individual clinics have invested in new health record systems, which may make the goal seem challenging. Still, MCUIH is committed to fostering discussions of challenges and to explore opportunities associated with each health record system. These discussions will inform the consortium's future approach to the issue.

DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS:

- **Capital Campaign Templates:** Provide templates and guidance for successful capital campaigns to fund strategic initiatives.
- **Strategic Site Visits:** Facilitate purposeful site visits between Montana UIOs to learn from successful models and implement best practices.

PROGRAMS:

- **Resource Reference Lists:** Compile comprehensive lists of resources to enhance service delivery in each clinic.
- **Master Calendar of Events:** Create a centralized calendar to coordinate and advertise Tribal and Urban events to benefit patients and the community.
- **Advocacy for Policy Changes:** Advocate for policy changes that would benefit UIOs and their communities.
- **Cultural Competency Training:** Provide ongoing training to enhance cultural competency among clinic staff.
- **Assistance in Pharmacy & Dental Relations:** Offer support in building and maintaining effective relations in pharmacy and dental services.



Meet the Clinics

All Nations Health Center (ANHC)



The All Nations Health Center (ANHC) campus spans three buildings, each serving distinct purposes — administrative offices, behavioral health, and clinical services. Recognized and well-established in the community, the center has experienced significant growth since its inception in December 2019. Plans are in progress for future expansion, including a dedicated medical facility/campus. ANHC spotlight services:

DENTAL SERVICES:

ANHC offers dental services three days a week, addressing the community's oral health needs.

MOBILE HEALTH UNIT:

Operating a mobile health unit, ANHC extends its healthcare services beyond its physical location, reaching areas with limited accessibility.

PHARMACY PARTNERSHIP:

ANHC has forged an impressive partnership with an outside pharmacy, setting a potential model for others in the consortium. This collaboration enhances pharmaceutical services for the community.

Billings Urban Indian Health and Wellness Center (BUIHWC)



Established in October 2018, Billings Urban Indian Health and Wellness Center (BUIHWC) is committed to serving the vibrant Native American tribes residing in the Billings area. The clinic provides essential healthcare services to recently released Native inmates from the nearby prison, extending support to individuals with limited resources. BUIHWC spotlight services:

INMATE SUPPORT SERVICES:

A notable aspect of BUIHWC's mission involves providing essential healthcare support to recently released Native inmates from the nearby prison, addressing their unique needs and challenges.

HOLISTIC PATIENT CARE:

Embracing a holistic approach, the dedicated team at BUIHWC diligently identifies and addresses the root causes of patient challenges, striving for comprehensive and patient-focused care.

CULTURAL INTEGRATION:

At BUIHWC, cultural competency is at the heart of their healthcare approach. The center fosters strong cultural connections through activities like drum making and therapeutic practices, creating an enriching environment. With a commitment to inclusion, the passionate and dedicated staff ensure that services respect and embrace diverse Native American traditions.



Indian Family Health Clinic (IFHC)



Established in 1999, Indian Family Health Clinic (IFHC) is situated in Great Falls and occupies an expansive 40,000 sq. ft. space. IFHC provides holistic health options to the Great Falls community. Spotlight services include:

FITNESS CENTER:

The clinic boasts an on-site gym equipped with a weight room, cardio facilities, and a yoga studio, cultivating a holistic approach to well-being. Notably, this facility offers complimentary service to all patients and staff at IFHC, reinforcing the commitment to accessible and inclusive healthcare initiatives.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES:

A dedicated behavioral health department provides addiction, group, family, and individual counseling. Strategically positioned next to the primary care clinic, the behavioral health wing is convenient for patients and allows staff to guide them between healthcare services.

CULTURAL PROGRAMMING:

IFHC fosters personal growth and empowerment by reconnecting individuals with their roots, heritage, and values. Recognizing the importance of traditions, culture, holistic healing, and overall well-being, IFHC has developed a program that encompasses these elements.

Helena Indian Alliance (HIA)



The Helena Indian Alliance (HIA) was founded in 1980 and received its Indian Health Service Urban Indian Health contract soon after. Named in memory of Leo Pocha, a key figure in bringing these services to Helena for tribal members, it became Montana's first free clinic and the inaugural urban Indian health center in the state. In 2023 HIA opened a new addition to the existing facility enhancing capacity. A few spotlights on HIA services:

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND REFERRALS:

Establishing strong community partnerships, HIA receives referrals from other agencies and holds Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with behavioral health courts, community partnerships, and universities for staffing.

CULTURALLY TAILORED TOBACCO PREVENTION:

HIA's tobacco prevention program is culturally tailored for Native individuals, incorporating cultural practices to aid in quitting commercial tobacco.

YOUTH PROGRAMS:

Offering diverse youth programs, HIA engages young minds with activities such as homework help, pottery, exercise, painting, tie-dye, beading, sewing, and traditional games.



Butte Native Wellness Center (BNWC)



Butte Native Wellness Center (BNWC) is the newest Urban Indian Health Care Clinic and serves Butte and the surrounding areas. Created in 2022, BNWC promotes physical, mental, and spiritual well-being through a variety of services and programs. A few spotlights:

NUTRITION SERVICES

BNWC offers nutrition services that promote healthy lifestyles among patients. These services encompass nutrition education and a specialized food pharmacy for individuals managing diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, and other dietary restrictions. The nutrition program at BNWC goes beyond conventional support by incorporating traditional foods and recipes and providing Indigenous meal kits.

INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:

Food Sovereignty at BNWC is flourishing in its second year at the Butte Community Garden. Cultivating a diverse range of vegetables and herbs, the clinic organized three harvest events for patients and families. BNWC envisions expanding these initiatives by offering winter gardening classes empowering community members to cultivate healthy

produce in the Butte climate. Aligned with their Supper and Stories, and Food “Farmacy” programs, this project promotes healthy eating and fosters connections to Native heritage through recipes and Indigenous ingredients.

CULTURE DEPARTMENT AND RESOURCES:

BNWCs Culture Department builds community connections through diverse cultural offerings. The traditional medicine pharmacy provides free sage, tobacco, cedar, sweetgrass, and other plant medicines, emphasizing a deeper connection to cultural practices. BNWC hosts engaging “Supper and Stories” events, providing a platform for Native American tales, while beading workshops encourage community members to express themselves through traditional art. Drumming circles further contribute to the cultural vibrancy, creating unity and rhythm within the community.

Acknowledgements

We thank Project Mosaic for their invaluable collaboration in research, facilitation, and data generation. Our esteemed board members, Rachel Arthur, Skye McGinty, Todd Wilson, Leonard Smith, and Tina Randall, have pivotally guided our consortium. Special thanks to our Urban Indian Clinics – Indian Family Health Clinic, All Nations Health Center, Helena Indian Alliance, Billings Urban Indian Health and Wellness Center, and Butte Native Wellness Center – for their unwavering commitment.

We express our deep appreciation to Headwaters Foundation, our major partner providing seed funds for establishing the consortium, and our growing partners, including Montana Healthcare Foundation, St. Joseph Community Partnership Fund, and Native American Development Corporation, who served as our fiscal sponsor from 2021-2023. Our gratitude extends to collaborators such as Montana Primary Care Association, JG Research and Evaluation, Loveland Consulting, SetPoint Public Relations, Health Mothers Healthy Babies, the Tribes in Montana, Accelerate Montana, and the National Council for Urban Indian Health. Together, these collaborations have enriched and strengthened our mission.

CONTACT US

Website: mcuih.org

LinkedIn: [Montana Consortium for Urban Indian Health](#)

Phone: (406) 410-5164



MONTANA CONSORTIUM FOR
Urban Indian Health

© 2024, Montana Consortium of Urban Indian Health, All Rights Reserved.