



Upper Missouri District Health Unit

"Your Public Health Professionals"

Upper Missouri District Health Unit Report to the Interim Health Services Committee

Study on the desirability and feasibility of placing Fort Berthold in a single health unit.
Rough Rider Room
October 26th, 2011

Good Day Chairman, Judy Lee and members of the Interim Health Services Committee. I am Javayne Oyloe, interim executive officer for Upper Missouri District Health Unit. I will comment on how UMDHU engages Fort Berthold residents and health care providers in regard to the feasibility and desirability of placing Fort Berthold in a single public health unit. UMDHU is a four-county health unit serving Williams, Divide and two counties on the reservation, Mountrail and McKenzie. The reservation cities include New Town, Parshall and Mandaree.

UMDHU agrees there is a critical need to better meet the existing and future public-health needs in the Fort Berthold area. The feasibility of a single health unit is a very complex proposal. Public-health expertise would be needed to identify gaps, prioritize services and implement the significant changes needed. Just as an initial step, completion of a thorough community health assessment would be required.

The need to work with tribal health services, federal health services, and local healthcare providers creates a challenging situation for decision making in regard to public health. UMDHU recommends creating a team comprised of all-local healthcare providers and individuals with expertise in public health. This team would create a plan to improve the chronic and developing health concerns for individuals living in the Fort Berthold area.

Several issues hamper providing services in the area, including road damage, traffic congestion, unsafe driving and construction.

It is obvious a funding mechanism would need to be found to develop the needed public-health infrastructure, including extensive training.

Finally, it is very difficult to fill any public-health positions with individuals having adequate public-health experience, because current local-public-health budgets fall woefully short of enabling us to assure the competitive salaries being demanded during this time of exceptional economic conditions in western North Dakota. For example, it is for this very reason that I have been serving as a part-time, interim Executive Officer for 14 months; there simply have been no viable candidates for the position with the salary that UMDHU is able to offer.

We will continue to do our best to work with partners in the Fort Berthold area to both provide and strengthen critically-need public-health services.

The services UMDHU provides in the Fort Berthold area include:

Health Promotion

We provide assistance with tobacco cessation, prevention and control (monthly meetings are scheduled). Nutrition, physical activity, worksite wellness and annual school visits are addressed in this area.

Emergency Preparedness

We provide assistance with the emergency plans for the Fort Berthold area, including guidance, writing and assistance in implementation, as needed.

Environmental Health

We collaborate as requested.

Nursing --

Family Planning: Meetings were held with IHS staff and consensus was reached for referrals and STD testing. Contacts to area clinics are made twice a year. All clients, American Indian and non-American Indian, are seen on site in Stanley office. We accept referrals into the program from all providers.

MCH: Welcome Home Baby visits are made to homes throughout the UMDHU service area, both on and off the Reservation.

WIC services are offered in Mountrail County Stanley office every two months.

School Health: All 7 schools in Mountrail receive intensive fall visits with administrators to highlight services available through UMDHU. Vision Screenings, puberty education, STD education are offered to all schools.

Communicable Disease: HIV/Ryan White case management is offered through all UMDHU service area. Currently, case load for Mountrail is one client who has been on Ryan White services since 2003-04. UMDHU contact averages one time every 2 months, 2 hours.

TB testing and medication delivery are available through all UMDHU service area. UMDHU averages one client every 2 years for medication delivery and test and read.

Immunizations are offered through Stanley office to all people in service area, American Indian and non-American Indian. Mountrail has two providers of immunizations: Minne -Tohe and UMDHU. Contact with IHS public health nurses is maintained on a monthly basis re: immunization reminder/recall and follow up are made with clients seeing both agencies. Annual flu immunization clinics are held in all communities and open to all residents.

Adult Health: Women's Way education is provided throughout service area including the reservation. Senior Services foot care and health clinics are offered every two months in all Mountrail towns, either at Senior Centers or public community centers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective in regard to placing Fort Berthold in a single health unit.