



## **Indian Health Service Press Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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# **IHS Opens New Youth Regional Treatment Center in California**

The Indian Health Service (IHS), in consultation with the 104 federally-recognized tribes of California, today announced the grand opening of the Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center in Hemet, Calif. The new Youth Regional Treatment Center (YRTC) will provide culturally appropriate substance use disorder services to American Indian and Alaska Native youth ages 12-17.

“Today, IHS is pleased to announce the first of two youth regional treatment centers that will serve American Indian and Alaska Native youth in California,” said the IHS Acting Director, Rear Adm. Chris Buchanan, REHS, MPH. “Desert Sage demonstrates our commitment to our American Indian and Alaska Native youth and families by offering culturally-centered, evidence-based, individualized behavioral health services.”

Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center will treat approximately 100 tribal youth annually. The wellness center is the first federally-owned and operated health care facility in California to serve American Indians and Alaska Natives. Currently, most of California’s Native American youth who receive residential chemical dependency treatment are sent out-of-state to non-IHS or non-tribal facilities that do not always meet the unique cultural needs of Native American youth. The IHS is working towards the construction of a second YRTC in California. The estimated completion date for the Sacred Oaks Healing Center in Davis, Calif is early 2019.

“The new YRTCs in California are an important step to helping thousands of Native American youth in California who need residential care, “ said IHS California Area Director Beverly Miller. “They will be staffed by a team of mental health care professionals, medical providers, and traditional healers who will work in concert to treat the whole person.”

The YRTCs will provide comprehensive and holistic care, including:

- Mental health assessments, health care services, and individualized treatment plans
- Structured chemical dependency programs (e.g., 12-step programs)
- Individual, group, and family therapy
- Academic education
- Vocational and life-skills training
- Activities to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of Native American youth

The Desert Sage Youth Wellness Center in Hemet is approximately 35,300 square feet and includes three buildings with 32 beds and five family suites. It will employ 70 full-time employees. The center was designed for sustainability and is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified. Interior features include classrooms, computer lab, art room, a commercial kitchen, dining area, cultural space, exam rooms, employee offices, an indoor half-court gymnasium, and a weight room. Exterior features include an outdoor basketball court and walking trails. It is one of 11 YRTCs across the US funded by IHS.

The [California Area Indian Health Service](#) provides the IHS healthcare delivery system to the State of California, the home of the largest population of American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) in the country.

The [IHS](#), an agency in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. Follow IHS on [Facebook](#).

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