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## **Mountain-Pacific Quality Health to Partner in Trauma-Informed Care for Montana Indian Health Organizations**

**Helena, Mont.,** (May 13, 2019) – Montana Healthcare Foundation awarded Mountain-Pacific Quality Health a \$98,000 grant to work in collaboration with the Indian Health Service facilities across Montana to implement a trauma-informed care system. Mountain-Pacific will facilitate organization-wide workflows for trauma screening, help prevent secondary traumatic stress in staff and help build partnerships that support continuous mental and emotional well-being for patients and staff of the Indian health organizations. Mountain-Pacific will also work with IHS to develop trauma-informed policies and procedures for implementation, as well as staff training materials and guides for trauma screening, treatment or referral.

Sara Medley, Mountain-Pacific's CEO says, "We are honored to support and provide Montana's Indian health organizations with the tools to recognize and respond to trauma, so healing can occur."

Trauma results from a historical and/or current event or circumstance experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful, with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional and/or spiritual well-being. The more traumatic the experience an individual endures, the greater the risk for chronic health conditions and health-risk behaviors later in life, such as autoimmune diseases, lung disease, heart disease, liver disease, cancer, depression, substance use disorder, and self-harming behaviors, according to studies.

"We look forward to working in collaboration with Mountain-Pacific to build additional trauma awareness capacity, which will aid in addressing traumatic experiences of our patients and also bring needed awareness to staff that work for the Indian Health Service," said Bryce Redgrave, acting director of the IHS Billings Area Office. "The additional support will help the Billings Area IHS to develop into a trauma informed healthcare organization."

Native American youth are at an increased risk of trauma, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of grief and exposure to violence, according to the National Native Children's Trauma Center. Mountain-Pacific will work with IHS to address recommendations from the center based on an assessment of current trauma-informed practices in Indian health care in Montana.

The project will first determine the IHS facilities' needs for support. An ultimate goal is for Indian cultural healing methods to be accepted once again and encouraged as tools to build resiliency and recover from trauma.

**About Mountain-Pacific**—Mountain-Pacific is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and holds federal and state contracts that allow them to oversee the quality of care for Medicare and Medicaid members. Mountain-Pacific works within its region (Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Territories of Guam and American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) to help improve the delivery of health care and the systems that provide it. Mountain-Pacific's goal is to increase access to high-quality health care that is affordable, safe and of value to the patients they serve. [www.mpqhf.org](http://www.mpqhf.org)

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