

# New health center to improve, enhance medical services

## What is the Health & Wellness Center?

The proposed Health & Wellness Center is a 35,000 square foot building which will unite the Indian Health Service and Tribal health promotion programs. It will permit the addition of 25 health care professionals to the current Indian Health Service (IHS) staff and the installation of modern medical equipment. The new Center will offer additional services and extended hours, making it easier for patients to receive health care in a timely fashion.

## Why is the Health & Wellness Center needed?

Our studies, as well as those of the IHS, indicate that a facility needs to be at least three times the size of the current facility to adequately serve the community. The current clinic, more than half a century old, is poorly designed and has extremely limited expansion space. Fifty years ago, the Tribal membership was less than 800 people. Today, there are more than 3,000 people. The workload of the health center was 20,000 visits in 1984. In just six years, the visits have increased to over

30,000. Our population growth will place even more pressure on the facility in the next few years and create greater frustrations for patients.

Our health status is at a critical level. According to last year's Community Health Status report, the health status of Tribal members is much worse than that of other Oregon residents. If we are to reach our goal of becoming a healthier Native American community in the nation by the Year 2000, major changes in the delivery of health care services are needed. By consolidating the expanded IHS treatment programs and Tribal health promotion, wellness, and prevention programs, our health status is expected to substantially improve.

## When did the Tribal Council become aware of the problem?

Community health has been an ongoing priority for the Tribal Council. The Council first began developing a proposal for the Health & Wellness Center more than three years ago. Discussions with IHS and Congress have continued since then. The alarming results of the Community Health Status report emphasized the urgency for pursuing the project.

## Why is the current proposal the best solution?

By treaty, the federal government is obligated to provide health care services to the people of Warm Springs. The IHS, as the provider of these services, is also responsible for maintaining adequate health care facilities. However, based on their construction priority system and the pace at which they are completing projects, it could be 15 to 20 years before IHS replaces the Warm Springs facility.

No other federal agency or foundation is prepared to provide the level of funding needed for this project. Petitioning Congress to direct a partnership between the IHS and the Tribes to construct, equip, and staff a facility was the only feasible plan to move forward.

The Tribal Council believes there is no better way for the people of Warm Springs to emphasize our commitment to improving community health than investing in and owning our own health facility.

## Do IHS and the federal government support the construction of the Health & Wellness Center?

The Tribal Council proposed the Center to both IHS and the Congress in 1989. The Congress instructed the IHS to report by March 1990 on the feasibility and costs of the proposal. At recent congressional hearings, Zane Jackson testified to the need for support of the concept of a Tribal-IHS partnership in providing the Center for Warm Springs members. While there are no guarantees that Congress will provide support for this Center, passage of the February 26, 1991 referendum will provide solid evidence to Congress that the Warm Springs community is committed to establishing a much stronger partnership between the Tribes and the IHS than has ever been proposed. That evidence will go a long way toward convincing Congress that our proposal is worthy of support.

## Under the current proposal, will the federal government uphold its obligation to provide health-care services?

Yes. But the proposal also gives the people of Warm Springs a greater role in determining the nature of health-care services for their own community.

## How much will the Health & Wellness Center cost?

The Confederated Tribes will design and build the facility at an estimated cost of \$5 million. The purpose of the upcoming referendum is to ask the people of Warm Springs to appropriate \$1,250,000 from Tribal funds and to permit Tribal leaders to raise the remainder through grants and borrowing.

The IHS is expected to provide \$1.3 million for all the equipment needed in the new facility. They are also expected to provide ongoing operational and maintenance and costs (\$200,000 per year). In addition, we have requested that IHS provide 25 new staff positions (increase by \$800,000 per year), bringing the total IHS medical staff at Warm Springs to 55. We expect IHS to begin paying rent for the space it occupies in the New Center. Also, the existing health center will be transferred to Tribal ownership.

## What is the financial impact of this proposal to the Confederated Tribes?

The initial impact will come from the \$1,250,000 appropriation from Tribal funds. We will attempt to secure some foundation support for the project and the remainder will be borrowed. There will be interest expense associated with the loans that will be required. We believe the added cost in the first ten years will be offset by the improvements in community health. During the next twenty years, the rental payments should repay our investment.

These costs have been built into Tribal budgets such that there will be little or no impact on funding for other Tribal programs or on the annual per capita payments to members.

## Where will the new Health & Wellness Center be located?

The Center will be located in Warm Springs on a three-acre tract just south of the Tribal Administration Building. This site was selected a number of months ago for its accessibility to Tribal members, for its proximity to the Community Learning Center that is now under development, and for the availability of adjacent expansion room.

## What will become of the current IHS clinic?

The facility will be transferred to the Tribes. Plans call for it to be remodeled and utilized by another Tribal program needing space.

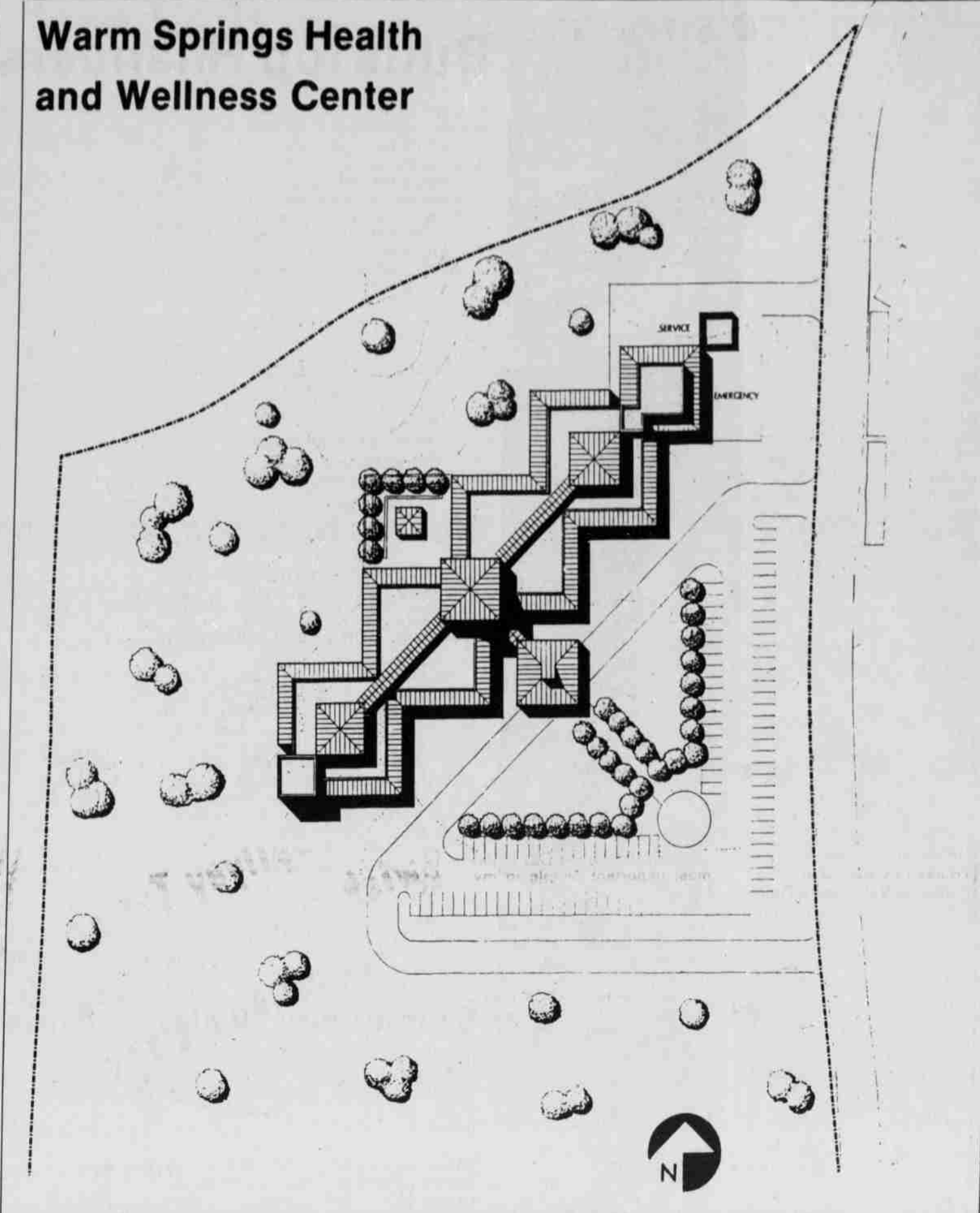
## When will construction begin?

Following the passage of the referendum, the design and approval phase of the project will take nearly a year. Construction is projected to start by February of 1992, and the Center should open in early 1993.

## Will the new facility create jobs for Tribal members?

Yes. Dozens of new jobs will be created during the building phase. Once completed, IHS and various Tribal programs are expected to have additional positions available. There will be many opportunities for our people, particularly the young, to develop long term careers in the health field.

## Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center



## Benefits of new health center summarized

### Less waiting time for medical services

- Separate waiting areas for different needs
- More examination rooms will speed up services
- Walk-in patients and people using specialty clinics can be served at the same time

### Extended hours will be possible

- Within 2 to 3 years, 25 additional IHS employees will allow some evening shifts and flexibility of hours

### Expanded services & activities

- Major increases in staff and more emphasis on education and prevention
- More specialty activities and clinics will be possible (orthodontics, periodontics, education, optometry, prenatal lunches, diabetic breakfasts, etc.)

### Quality of services

- A modern facility will enhance recruitment and retention of doctors and other staff

### Community control

- A tribal facility provides more opportunity for community involvement to discuss

issues and solve problems

### Expansion space

- The new location, across the street from the Longhouse and soon-to-be-built Early Childhood Center, has plenty of room building expansion and parking needs.

### Convenience

- The new facility's expanded staff and services, specialty clinics and capability to more quickly see patients, will reduce the need to travel off-reservation for medical and dental needs.

## Future IHS-funded positions planned

### First year:

- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Registered Nurse
- Medical Technologist
- Pharmacy Officer
- Accredited Records Technician

- Social Worker
- Supply Technician
- CHS Clerk
- Dental Officer (Dentist)
- Dental Assistant
- Sanitarian
- Public Health Nurse

### Second year:

- Medical Officer (Doctor)
- Registered Nurse
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Laboratory Technologist
- Health Records Technician
- Optometric/Audiometric Technician
- Medical Secretary
- Data Entry Clerk
- Receptionist-Telephone Operator
- Health Educator
- Dental Assistant
- Public Health Nurse
- Clerk/Typist

### Other possible specialists:

- Orthodontics
- Periodontics
- Optometry

## Vote set for Feb. 26

The third time around for the health and wellness center referendum will hopefully be the charm as tribal voters go to the polls Tuesday, February 26. Two previous elections, held in June and July, 1990, failed because not enough voters cast their ballots. However, had there been adequate voters, the wellness center would have been overwhelmingly approved.

The referendum asks voters to approach the appropriation of \$1.25 million in tribal funds and to

authorize the tribal government to secure the remaining funds, totaling \$3.75 million, from various grants, bonds and loans.

The 35,000 square foot facility will be located near the Agency Longhouse. The new building will be nearly four times larger than the existing 55-year-old building. The facility may offer expanded hours for medical and dental services plus an eye care clinic complete with the latest diagnostic equipment.

**One-third, or 544, of the 1,632 eligible voters must cast their ballots to validate the election.**

**VOTE! Tuesday, February 26 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Community Center VOTE!**