



TUBA CITY REGIONAL HEALTH CARE CORPORATION

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NEWS RELEASE Immediate Release

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TCRHCC AWARDED \$2.5 MILLION FOR HOSPITAL LIFE-SAFETY REPAIRS

Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation (TCRHCC) was recently awarded \$2.5 million by the Indian Health Service (IHS) to fix two critical structural problems at the IHS hospital in Tuba City.

John Hubbard, Jr., Navajo Area Indian Health Service (NAIHS) Director, sent a letter received on November 2, 2009 to TCRHCC that outlined the award of additional end of fiscal year stimulus dollars.

In February 2009, The Joint Commission (TJC) facility pre-audit discovered that Tuba City Hospital's ceiling design, which was outlawed in 1967 because it did not meet federal regulations for infectious disease transmission, posed an imminent life safety hazard that threatened patient health. The audit also found that the structural steel within the crawl space under the hospital did not have sufficient fire protection coating as required by law.

Grey Farrell, Jr., TCRHCC Board of Directors President said, "We are pleased that the NAIHS is in the unique position at this time to assist the TCRHCC in resolving the life-safety issues identified in the Hospital building audit."

Since discovering these structural problems at the hospital, TCRHCC has worked diligently to try to access funding to make the necessary repairs. TCRHCC asked Congress for funds to fix this problem, through both FY10 earmarks and stimulus funds. Both requests were denied.

In April 2009, TCRHCC representatives met with IHS officials at Headquarters in Rockville, Maryland to discuss these issues. TCRHCC contacted the White House Tribal Liaison seeking help to fix these problems.

Joseph Engelken, TCRHCC CEO said, “We appreciate the IHS work to verify and to support correction of these defects. This will only increase both patients and employee safety, which is vital to quality health care.”

TCRHCC operates Tuba City Hospital under a Public Law 93-638 self governance contract. The hospital is located in Coconino County, on the Navajo reservation and serves over 75,000 Navajos from the western part of the reservation.

“Now we look forward to quickly getting these repairs done,” said Tim Newland, Safety Officer for TCRHCC.

The Hospital board and staff wish to thank all those who helped to make the hospital safer: Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick; Senator Jon Kyl; Navajo Nation Council Delegates Evelyn Acothley and Thomas Walker Jr., and the Navajo Nation Council Health & Social Services Committee members; Navajo Nation Vice-President Ben Shelly; Jodi Gillette of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

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