

## Report in Brief

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
**OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**



### Why OIG Did This Review

Longstanding challenges, including insufficient oversight and limited access to specialists, likely impact the quality of health care services provided to American Indians and Alaskan Natives. In certain cases, the Federal government permits Tribes to administer their own health care programs through Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), which receive Federal funding but limited Federal oversight in recognition of the independent nation status of the Tribes. An initial OIG analysis of the Passamaquoddy Tribe's Pleasant Point Health Center (PPHC), a Medicare FQHC, identified potential concerns about quality of care provided to its members which warranted a more detailed review.

Our objective was to determine whether the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point met Federal and Tribal health and safety requirements for the quality of health care provided at PPHC.

### How OIG Did This Review

We reviewed the scope of services identified in the Indian Health Service's contracts with the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point, requirements for Medicare FQHC, and Tribal requirements for calendar years 2014 through 2016 and compared services that were required to be provided to actual services rendered at PPHC.

## The Passamaquoddy Tribe's Pleasant Point Health Center Did Not Always Meet Federal and Tribal Health and Safety Requirements

### What OIG Found

The Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point did not always meet Federal and Tribal health and safety requirements for the quality of care at PPHC. Specifically, we found that PPHC did not always have a physician who provided medical direction for the health center, clear lines of authority and responsibility between medical and administrative decision-making, medical policies and procedures (including pain-management treatment prioritization for opioid prescription and compliance monitoring), and other policies and procedures needed to comply with the requirements.

Because the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point did not provide adequate oversight and implement policies and procedures for its health center, PPHC did not always meet Federal and Tribal requirements, which increased the risk that patients did not always receive quality health care and PPHC may hire unqualified medical providers and administrative staff.

### What OIG Recommends

We made several recommendations to the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point, including that it (1) ensures PPHC is under the medical direction of a physician, (2) establishes clear lines of authority and responsibility between medical and administrative decision-making, and (3) develops and implements medical policies and procedures to comply with health and safety requirements.

The Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point concurred with our recommendations. For example, PPHC has solicited assistance from Indian Health Services to recruit a medical director to fulfill the FQHC required physician responsibilities.