

# DeTour clinic closing due to canceled lease



**LANA CAUSLEY,  
DIRECTOR, UNIT II**

I received many calls last month about not having a unit report (glad people noticed, especially Captain Bloch; the email was a blessing), but I can say the content of my last report struck a few nerves, and did have an impact on my comments. There really can't be anything worse than advocating for communities in great need of solutions and access to services, just to be faced with politics or games due to my support or non-support on items. It is frustrating but solutions to each fire can be addressed as I am faced with them.

My first update is the Tribal Action Plan (TAP). We held our monthly meeting in March and the attendance was much better — we had almost all of our departments included (board members, directors Sorenson, Chase and myself) with most of the information analyzed. As stated in the past, we held community forums, focus groups (477 individuals included) and mailed a survey to about 6,700 tribal homes. Through the data collected and the outcome of the public forums, we identified that the best practice for this process was the face-to-face input. Only 588 of the 6,700 mailed surveys were returned. In total, 1,065 tribal members and employees participated in this process. During this collection of data and information for a plan we asked what substances people are addicted to, the ways in which people are affected and input and ideas for solving the identified problems.

Once all this information and input is reviewed and discussed by the group of professionals, board members and tribal departments, we are to begin creating a TRIBAL ACTION PLAN based on their information. We will be holding our regular group meeting this month to comment on the results and a technical assistance

representative from Fox Valley will be assisting us once again. Although I'm disappointed in the lack of responses by mail and the time it had taken to get to this point, I'm confident that we may have enough information (we have to make it work) to at least identify the gaps and begin making a plan. All of you know that this has been my priority and continuing to speak about it, educate and constantly keep this on the forefront will prevail for better services and outcomes for our families.

We had some frustrating, unexpected news this past month for our clinic in DeTour. We had seen that the DeTour Clinic would be closing at the end of this month. Once this was confirmed, I inquired to our health director about the situation and it was confirmed that the leaseholder was canceling the lease. We had no role in this nor had we been told. We did speak to War Memorial Hospital and together we will seek out alternatives for members to pick up prescriptions and get labs drawn. We will have to identify another location and this will be a priority with both Director Hollowell and myself. The services on Drummond Island (took some time to secure but it happened) will remain the same and we are informed there will be no change in service at that location.

The need for transportation for services is truly the biggest challenge we have for our members, we have discussed this at our adhoc meetings and both Director Hollowell and I are at the meetings each and every month with the health staff to try and coordinate, identify and determine how we can better service members. A few outcomes of these meetings have been the expanded service on Drummond Island and DeTour, increased clinics and activities in Hessel and Newberry, and the health director meeting with all hospitals in the seven-county service area to negotiate after hours and weekend care. One item that I can speak about now is the possibility of a once-a-month clinic being offered in the Naubinway area. We had been informed this may be a possibility and I'm hoping all the negotiating gets worked out soon to see that result once a location is secured. I will say it's sometimes frustrating for the wait periods, securing any funding available, getting through the politics of any suggestion, and, as Unit II is so geographical-

ly large, the needs are very great and the results become challenging in every step.

Our temporary casino executive made some very crucial changes in our operations and ways of reducing costs (no mass layoffs) and seeing better revenue for our bottom line. I had the opportunity to sit in on a full staff meeting he held with our casino workers in the Hessel area. The message was positive, factual and straightforward about the need for change and the results if we can get there together. I spoke to many team members after that meeting and had a response that sure was needed. Our staff in all casinos work very hard and take so many hits being in the front line, that encouragement, better business practices as well as communication seems to energize our staff — they all want success in their casinos where they are employed and that was evident to see.

I have constantly spoken about pride for our tribe and our businesses so being part of this change is exciting. We empower people, we will see them step up and take charge. I have many members ask me how things are going with the new direction and plans and, simply put, if the board takes critical, educated recommendations and lets the experts do the job, we will see results for better business, so far so good and I'm staying out of the micromanaging, letting the changes work and expecting positive outcomes (challenges and hiccups will come as well). I'm at the table each week to listen and offer feedback but in no way do I want to hinder results for our casino operations to improve. It's been a little over three months since our new direction and our numbers have already shown an improvement, so that is simply the best direction we can go.

One item I have spoken about in the past is diversity for profit. Director Hoffman initiated and brought forward a resolution to once again expand this opportunity. During the last few months the board discussed and was in the process of creating a job description for a qualified, educated economic development director. In the past, we had a committee as well as a director, but it's been more than a decade since a position or attention has been given to this. Our businesses that we have are all under utilized and sometimes clear constant direction is lacking. This past meeting, the

board of directors committed to making that a priority once again and we will be advertising and posting for a director position. There are truly high expectations from me on moving forward with this step and I wanted to place it in my unit report so that members can pass the word that we are seeking a qualified, educated expert to assist our other businesses in the tribe. I was hesitant for a very long time due to the fear of our past hiring practices and experiences but once again I'm expecting that we will take steps for due diligence and the hiring of a qualified person that can and must make expert changes for our "other" revenue generating operations we own and to also seek out funding, create diversity, accountability and better practices for growth in those operations. Again, I supported this as a step in moving forward and will expect outcomes that benefit our businesses.

One last item I am so excited to report, for the last two-and-a-half years, interested tribal members and a few board members (myself, directors Massaway and McLeod) have committed and been working on creating new bylaws (guiding principles) for a committee known as our tribe's "Cultural Committee." We have finally been approved by the full board of directors with a new name and new guiding principles! After meeting in all areas, gathering interested tribal members to the committee and working toward steps to move forward, it's finalized and completed. We actually had to present to the board a couple different times to get approved for this endeavor, but it's once again an active committee. Our new name for this committee is "Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin Waawiyeyaa Circle," our mission for this committee is "to strengthen, preserve, protect and promote the rich ancestral life ways of Anishinaabe." Our guiding principles are based on the Seven Grandfathers and all tribal members and communities are encouraged and invited to come to all meetings. When we first began the process of recreating this committee we discussed meeting once per month on a specific date and traveling to areas to be inclusive of all our communities that we could host at. Throughout this we gathered a committee and went through all

the painstaking tasks to move forward in a good way. At this point, we have an almost full committee but are still in need of three male participants (I have written about this before and our vacancies are posted in the paper). I encourage any interested members to call Joanne Carr, (906) 635-6050, and place your request to be part of the committee.

Moving forward, our goal is to meet in all areas to offer teaching, circles, feasts and discussions with members on what they would like to see and expectations from our tribe on the needs to uphold traditions, values and encouragement of our way of life. Our Cultural Department has been involved and attends the meetings as well, when available. You can also always contact any of our staff in the Cultural Department as well as Traditional Medicine for your needs and input. They are committed and assist many with what's needed for our people and I'm very thankful for them. Please look for notices and communications on our meeting dates on the tribe's website and in the paper and always feel free to participate. Keeping our traditions is a tribe's work so I'm very happy that this has finally been promoted once again.

In closing, it has been a very tough month for many families in our communities. In my life, I meet many people who impact my path and mean so much to me either from a personal or professional level. During the last three weeks, I attended four services to pay my respects to tribal members who have had an effect on me one way or another. Each and every time I thought of how quickly life can change; it's always so hard to say "Baamaapii" to someone you love, no matter what your beliefs are for the other side, so the simple act it takes to show people that you are there for them and care can mean so much. Please say special prayers for the people who are grieving for loved ones because the loss I've seen this past month was difficult for many tribal families.

Please contact me for any discussions or to meet with me.

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