

THE LACK OF ACCESS TO STUDENT HEALTHCARE SERVICES ON BIE OWNED SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

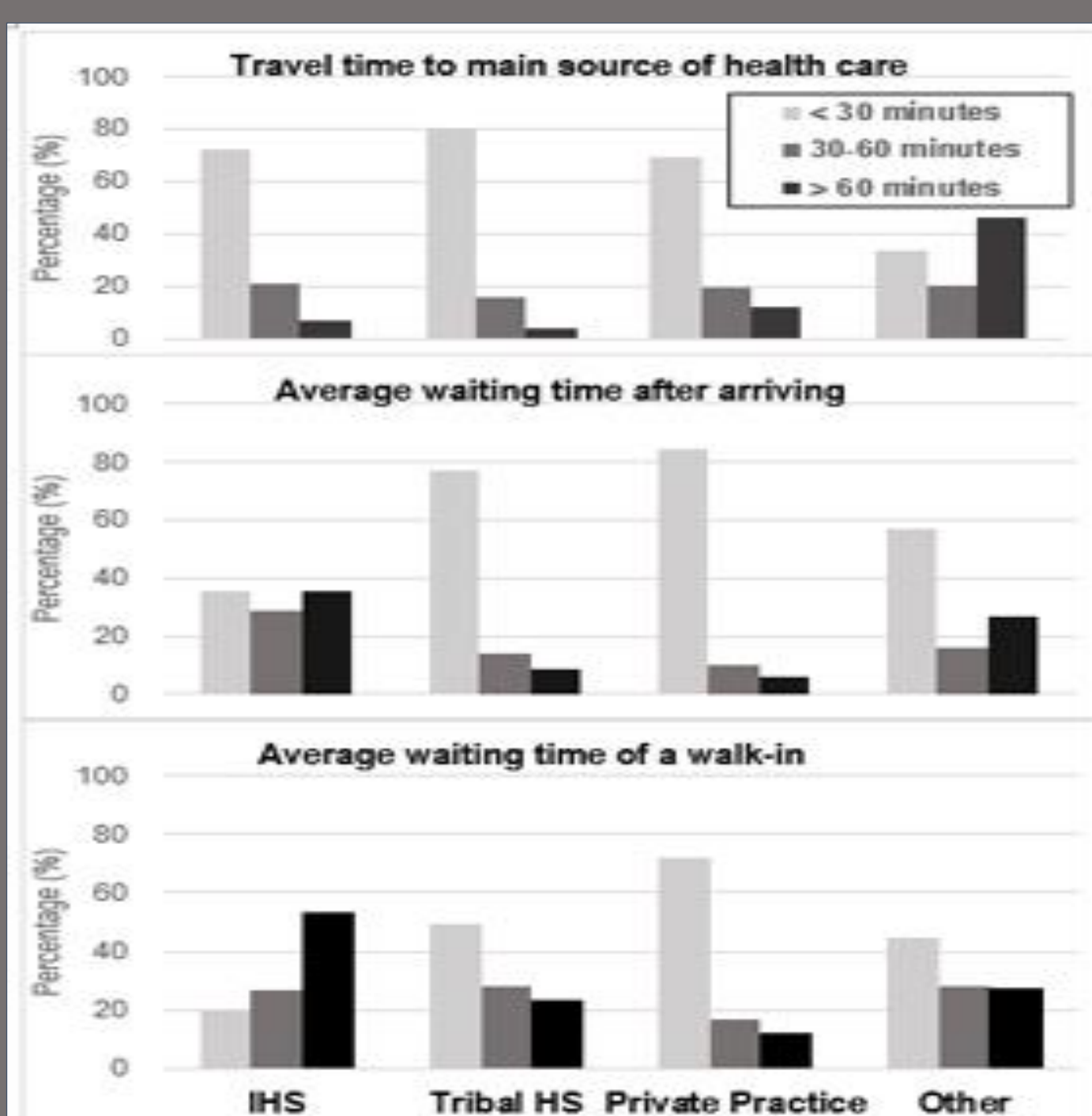
"Kill the Indian, Save the Man," was the policy adopted by Indian Residential Boarding Schools which were intended to remove American Indian and Alaskan Native children from their homes and impose the destruction of their communities and cultures. Students endured physical, emotional, sexual, and cultural abuse and were punished for speaking their languages. While this was the experience of our previous generations, boarding schools have evolved. Attending and graduating from a residential boarding school was a vital decision in my success as I was given countless educational opportunities. However, the access to student healthcare has not made the same advancements.

BARRIERS & DISPARITIES

Students from across the country come to these boarding schools to earn their education. During the school year, students may be hundreds to thousands of miles from their families and are unable to reach them if an issue were to arise. At Riverside Indian School located in Anadarko, Oklahoma, there is a relationship present with Indian Health Services. RIS provides students with many essential services through an RN stationed on campus, and telehealth communications. The Anadarko Indian Health Center is one mile away and serves the students at RIS. However, it does not offer services for emergent instances and serves a much larger audience than just the students, as a large portion of Anadarko residents rely on their aid. When these issues occur, students travel an hour to the closest Indian Health Hospital in Lawton, Oklahoma, and hope to be seen as a walk-in patient. According to a study conducted earlier this year, the average wait time for walk-in patients was more than sixty minutes.

Results from the Strong Heart Study, conducted in 2023, displaying healthcare access and usage patterns among Native Americans.

Abstract P373: Health Care Access and Usage Patterns Among Native Americans: The Strong Heart Study | Circulation (ahajournals.org)



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CURRENT EFFORTS

- Anadarko Indian Health Center**
1 mile away
 Offers preventative services, primary care, and management for conditions in the community (pharmacy).
- Carnegie Indian Health Center**
25 miles away
 Provides one full time family medicine provider.
- Lawton Indian Hospital**
40 miles away
 Full-service hospital including general surgery, gynecology, physical therapy, radiology, optometry, internal medicine, etc.



★ = Riverside Indian School

○ =Nearby Indian Health clinics

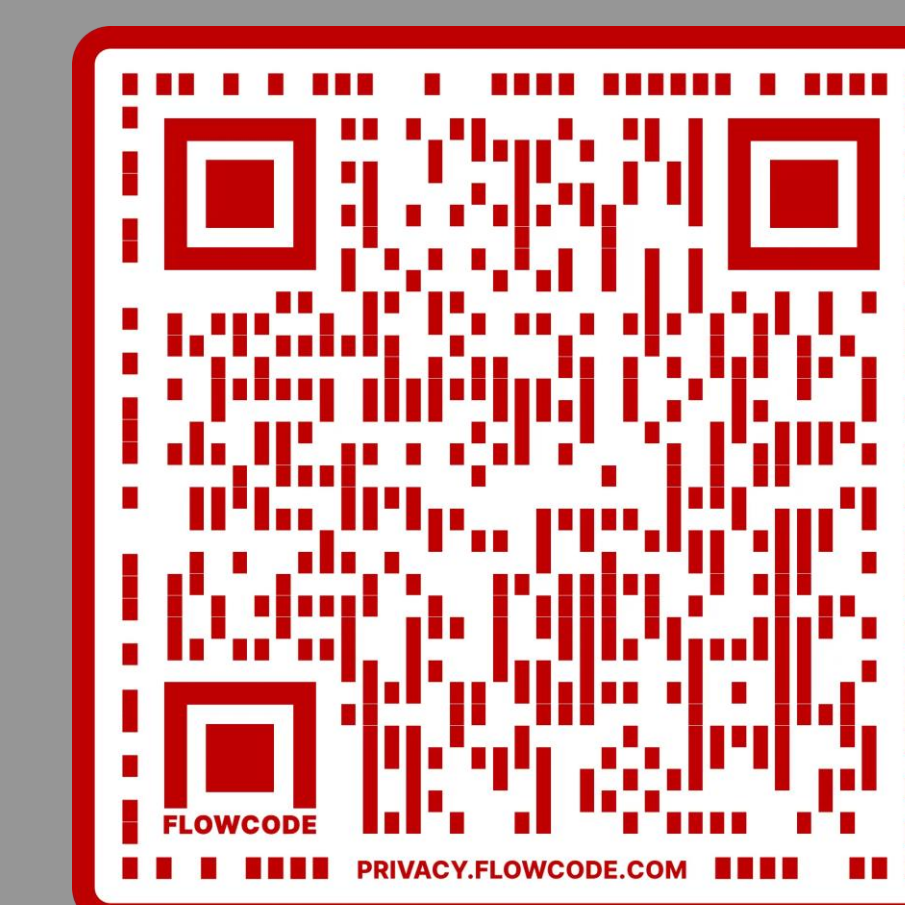
RECOMMENDATIONS

Through conducting this research, there are several suggestions to be made. These include:

- Employ full-time medical staff.**
 Hire a nurse practitioner or physicians assistant who is trained to handle emergent situations. This would be beneficial in instances such as seizure episodes, broken bones, giving stitches, etc.
- Partner with the University of Oklahoma's School of Medicine or tribes headquartered in Anadarko, Oklahoma.**
 Collaborate with OU's School of Medicine students or local tribes to travel to campus to administer services. This would be advantageous for both parties, as medical students could earn practicum hours.
- Provide urgent care services on campus.**
 Currently, there are no existing models of urgent care facilities and services on BIE owned schools. Thus, this proposal is modeled after previously functioning urgent care programs present on university campuses. This would be fully staffed with medical professionals who are prepared to handle urgent situations, as well as perform other services provided at full-service hospitals, excluding surgery.

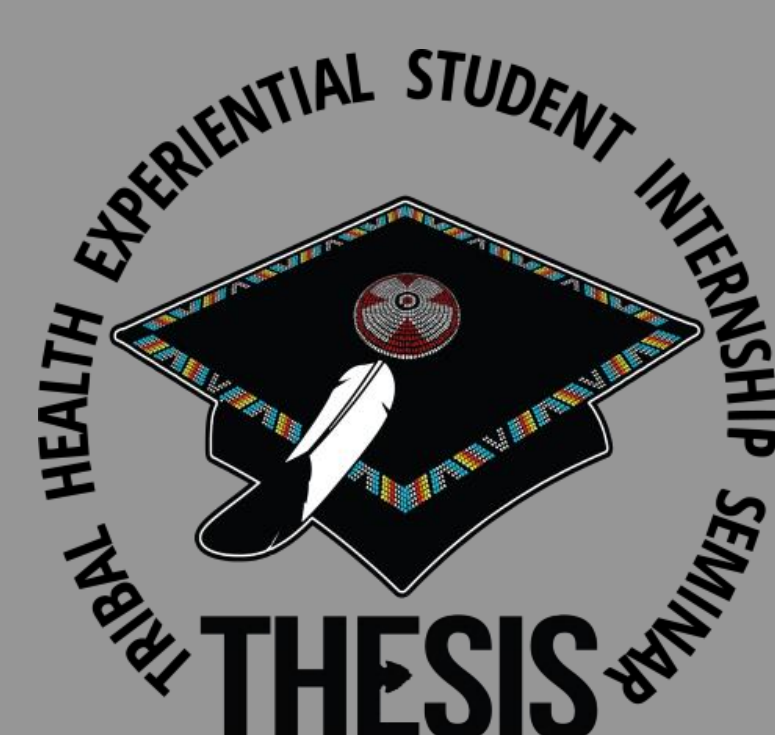
Providing this aid would allow students at Riverside Indian School to have access to quick and advanced healthcare services. This is essential for the student's developmental years as limited access can produce detrimental consequences.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Scan the QR code to access references!

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