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The Portland Indian Health Area will be reorganized before July 1, Dr. Robert Zobel, Area Medical Officer in Charge, said today.

The five-State Area will be divided into 2 Areas. The Portland Area Office will continue to administer Federal health services for an estimated 22,000 Indians in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Services for an estimated 25,500 Indians in Montana and Wyoming will be administered by the newly designated Area Office at Billings, Montana, formerly the Billings Subarea Office under the jurisdiction of the Portland Area.

Some management functions and personnel will be transferred from Portland to the newly established Billings Area, where they will be in closer proximity to the facilities which they are responsible for serving. These include 4 Indian hospitals and several field clinics. The professional personnel and their supporting staff will remain relatively unchanged in the Portland Area Office. Sufficient administrative staff will be retained to operate the Portland Area Office. The reorganization will not affect the level of services now provided for Indians in these States or the working relationships with the Indian tribes and Federal agencies.

Dr. Zobel said that Indians are being notified through their Tribal Councils of the changes in the Area Office.