



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You

Osiyo -

We are grateful for the talented physicians working for Cherokee Nation Health Services, which is the largest tribal health system in the United States. Our doctors take care of us, and we should celebrate their efforts and help patients better understand a physician's sacrifice and dedication. It's why the tribe recently honored 300 physicians during our annual "Our Docs Roc" event with a dinner and awards ceremony.

It gave us a chance to recognize the people that work in the hospital, and the physicians, dentists and medical support staff who provide excellent care.

In the past year, we have achieved many great accomplishments, and that is due, in part, to our excellent staff. We have greatly increased dental care to Cherokee and Native peoples in Oklahoma. Our dental services team is expected to see more than 135,000 patient visits this year. That is up 60,000 patient visits from just five years ago.

Our nationally recognized Hepatitis C program has cured 94 percent of patients we have screened who tested positive and have been treated for the deadly disease. Cherokee Nation was also the first tribe to achieve Public Health accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board. Just this past week, Cherokee Nation Health Services accepted the Public Health Innovation Award given by the National Indian Health Board.

Cherokee Nation also won the C.T. Thompson Award for excellence in trauma care. We now have full-time cardiology services, and in the past 12 months, about 900 babies were born at W.W. Hastings. We again received marks for clinical excellence from an international hospital accreditation firm, and the Cherokee Nation's Emergency Management Services was recognized for its capabilities in northeast Oklahoma.

In the past year, we made national news by breaking ground on Cherokee Nation's 469,000-square-foot health facility. Indian Health Service will fund the operations and staffing. It will be the largest Native health facility in the country, a game-changer for increasing our ability to provide quality care to our citizens. It means we will add even more talented staff to better address the record-setting volumes seen in both the Hastings emergency room and operation units.

Additionally, the new facility will allow our partnership with Oklahoma State University to continue, as we work in tandem to establish a medical school that targets Native students.

We should all thank our doctors and health care professionals who are helping improve the health of Cherokee Nation. Expanded services, better health care opportunities, shorter drives and wait times, and more health professionals to serve our people have been a few of my primary goals as Principal Chief. We are blessed to have a medical staff with the talents and abilities to execute those continuing improvements.

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