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CHEROKEE NATION®

## Health Services 2023 Annual Report

For calendar year January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

—TOGETHER—  
COMMUNITY • FAMILY • CULTURE

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# Osiyo!

The Cherokee Nation is one of the great success stories in American history. Today, we have an immense annual financial impact, more than \$3 billion, in Oklahoma. We are committed to giving our 460,000-plus citizens and all the residents of Northeast Oklahoma an improved quality of life. No Cherokee residing within the reservation has to drive more than 30 minutes for quality care.

Cherokee Nation remains committed to the health and wellbeing of all our citizens. This commitment is important for the future of our people and preservation of tribal government, and it begins with ensuring our citizens have access to quality health care.

As the largest tribe in the United States, we operate the largest tribal health system and we see more than 2 million patient visits annually within our system. We operate nine health centers and one hospital in northeast Oklahoma.

In the past year, we began construction on a state-of-the-art hospital that will replace the nearly 40-year-old W.W. Hastings Hospital in Tahlequah. The six-story, \$400 million hospital will span 400,000 feet and include 127 beds, a rooftop helipad, and will allow expanded services for Cherokee and Native citizens. In addition to the construction of the new hospital in the capitol of the Cherokee Nation, we've broken ground on a 106,000-square-foot, \$84 million health center in Salina while adding, expanding, and/or updating services at other health centers across the reservation in recent years. We aren't stopping with physical health care needs. Just last year, Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr., Deputy Chief Bryan Warner and the Council of the Cherokee Nation began work on the tribe's first in-house

drug treatment center. This \$18 million, 17,000-square-foot residential treatment center is just one part of the Cherokee Nation's historic \$100 million mental health investment through our Public Health and Wellness Fund Act legislation.

In 2024, we also celebrated the first class of graduates from the Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Cherokee Nation. The inaugural class of the nation's first tribally affiliated medical school had a total of 46 graduating students with nearly 20% of the graduates being Native American, including three Cherokee citizens.

Our hope back in 2020 when OSU-COM at Cherokee Nation was established was that a significant volume of these medical school graduates would establish their careers in the Cherokee Nation or rural Oklahoma and positively affect the lives of our citizens. We were elated to learn that more than a quarter of the graduates from the inaugural class matched to a rural or tribal residency in Oklahoma.

Also in 2024, the Cherokee Nation Medicine Residency Program graduated six new family medicine physicians, five of whom are staying to work at Cherokee Nation. Culturally, we know our people respond better when their health care professionals are from the community and they know and understand the Cherokee culture.

This strategy is part of a long-term plan to make health care better and attract top-notch professionals to serve our patients. We can deliver more effective and efficient health care, both physical and mental, and continue to provide the kind of health care the Cherokee people need and deserve. A better life begins with better health care.



*Chuck Hoskin Jr.*

**Chuck Hoskin Jr.**  
Principal Chief



*Bryan Warner*

**Bryan Warner**  
Deputy Principal Chief



# Cherokee Nation Cabinet



**Secretary of State**  
Shella Bowlin



**Chief of Staff**  
Dr. Corey Bunch



**Attorney General**  
Chad Harsha



**Treasurer**  
Janees Taylor



**Delegate to Congress**  
Kim Teehee



**Secretary of  
Natural Resources**  
Christina Justice



**Acting Marshal**  
Daniel Mead



**Secretary of  
Veterans Affairs**  
S. Joe Crittenden

# Council of the Cherokee Nation 2023-2027



**FIRST ROW (L to R):** Johnny Kidwell, At Large; Melvina Shotpouch, D. 10; Lisa Hall, D. 3; Speaker Mike Shambaugh, D. 9; Sasha Blackfox-Qualls, D. 1; Candessa Teehee, D. 2; Daryl Legg, D. 6.

**BACK ROW (L to R):** Danny Callison, D. 15; Joe Deere, D. 13; E.O. Smith, D. 5; Dora Patzkowski, D. 12; Joshua Sam, D. 7; Kendra McGeady, D. 11; Mike Dobbins, D. 4; Julia Coates, At Large; Codey Poindexter, D. 8; Kevin Easley, Jr., D. 14.

# Cherokee Nation Supreme Court Justices



**L to R:** Justice Rex Earl Starr, Justice Mark L. Dobbins, Justice Lee W. Paden, Chief Justice John C. Garrett, and Justice Shawna S. Baker.



## About Health Services

Cherokee Nation is the largest federally recognized Native American tribe with more than 460,000 registered tribal citizens. There are 258,789 citizens residing in Oklahoma, and 137,295 living within the reservation of the Cherokee Nation. Cherokee Nation Health Services (CNHS) is the largest tribally operated health care system in the United States. CNHS is a growing multifaceted health care system. In the clinical setting, the system serves over 1.6 million patients throughout 11 health care facilities. These include nine tribal health clinics, one employee clinic and one tribal hospital. Additionally, CNHS offers a wide array of community, social, and mental

health programs such as behavioral health, community health nursing, cancer prevention, diabetes prevention, Women Infants and Children, emergency medical services, environmental health, health research, emergency and risk management, clinical quality improvement and quality management. CNHS administers programs to deliver effective patient care, coordinate services, manage IT, and oversee facilities. The departments addressed above include but are not limited to Health IT, Health Privacy and Compliance, and Institutional Review Board (IRB), Research and Health Finance.



## MESSAGE FROM OUR HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

“Over the past year, our health system has experienced remarkable growth, expanding our reach and impact across the reservation. This success is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our entire team, including administrators, providers, and support personnel. Their unwavering commitment has ensured that we continue to deliver high-quality healthcare to our tribal citizens. Our vision, “Healthy Cherokee people, families, and communities for this and future generations,” remains at the heart of everything we do. It drives us to constantly improve and expand our services, ensuring that every citizen has access to the care they need. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to this vision, striving to create a healthier future for all.”

**-Dr. R. Stephen Jones**, CEO and Executive Director, Health Services



“We continue to celebrate our blessings and our milestones from the construction of a new hospital to witnessing the graduation of the first medical school class from the OSU-COM Tahlequah campus!”

**-Dr. Beth Harp**, Executive Medical Director/Chief Medical Officer- Cherokee Nation Health Services



“Over the last year, we’ve made significant progress towards achieving our vision of healthy Cherokee people, families, and communities for this and future generations by expanding access to care across our service lines. With the commitment of our physicians, providers, and staff, we will continue to strive for achieving the vision all of us at Cherokee Nation Health Services are committed to.”

**-Brian Hail**, Chief Operating Officer, Health Services



“I am privileged to be part of the Cherokee Nation Health Services team. We have reached numerous milestones, but our ongoing mission is to continuously improve access to care for our patients. Our exceptional team remains dedicated to delivering the highest quality of care and customer service. Each day, we strive to provide the best possible patient experience, and our efforts are truly appreciated.”

**-Wayne Coldwell**, Chief Operating Officer, Health Services



“CNHS is the largest and best tribal healthcare system in the country. Every member of our team works hard each day to ensure that both titles are applicable and fitting. Our healthcare system has weathered significant storms and has emerged bigger and better by staying focused on the Mission 'To ensure the story of the Cherokee Nation continues...' and the Vision of 'Healthy Cherokee people, families, and communities for this and future generations'. Our leadership's foresight and our methods of continuous quality improvement at every level of service ensure that we relentlessly strive for improvement and excellence. I remain humbled and honored to serve the tribal members who utilize the largest and best tribal healthcare system in the country.”

**-Brett Gray**, Deputy Executive Medical Director





Cherokee Nation's Dr. Blake Campbell

## Vision:

Healthy Cherokee people, families and communities for this and future generations.

## Mission:

To ensure the story of the Cherokee Nation continues, we partner with individuals, families, and communities to improve our health and quality of life.

## Values

Cherokee Nation Health Services operates with seven values and guiding principles.

Self-Determination: For Cherokees by Cherokees

Excellence: A legacy of superior quality and selflessness carried through generations

Respect: Holding each other sacred

Visible to the Community: Our strength is in our collective collaborations with each other

Integrity: Doing the right thing and achieving the highest standard in service

Compassion: Supporting each other with genuine concern and kindness

Equity: Balancing resources to address greatest needs.



## Planning Process

In 2018, the CNHS Strategic Planning Committee embarked on a strategic planning process to set the organization's directions and priorities for the three-year period from 2019 to 2021. The Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of CNHS staff representing leadership from all programs and services. The planning process included staff engagement and input to ensure the planning approach met the needs of the CNHS and the Cherokee Nation. The process also included information gathering, an analysis of external and internal forces, and the use of consensus to select the strategic priorities.

## Strategic Priorities

The CNHS Strategic Plan 2019-2021 is our first step toward integration, which refers to alignment of all our health centers and service lines to form a comprehensive system of care. Developing an integrated CNHS system requires continued investment in our capacity, infrastructure, resources and ability to adapt and respond to the needs of the community. These steps towards an integrated system of care are necessary to advance tribal population health.

# Strategic directions to our vision



### Governance & Structure

Align our governance and structure with our vision, mission, and values.



### Innovation & Quality

Promote innovation, performance and quality at all levels.



### Health Information Governance

Establish Cherokee Nation's health information governance.



### Workforce Development

Strengthen and cultivate a top-quality, high-performing workforce.

By implementing the strategic plan, we are working toward a better CNHS system for the future. Our actions today are setting the foundation for the future of our health system.

Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. and Deputy Chief Bryan Warner (center) along with other Cherokee Nation leaders break ground on the new \$400 million hospital.



# Largest tribally operated health care system in the United States

- 1.6 million system-wide encounters
- 11 health care facilities and one youth treatment center
- Community, social and mental health programs







## A-MO HEALTH CENTER

In 2023, Cherokee Nation broke ground on the new 106,000-square-foot health center that will replace the existing 29,000-square-foot facility in Salina to serve growing needs. The new health center will feature 12 exam rooms for primary care, a two-lane drive-thru pharmacy, 12 dental chair spaces, expanded optometry, a demonstration kitchen for community cooking classes with an outdoor roof terrace, conference rooms, labs, WIC, radiology and helipad. The health center will be open and fully operational in late 2025.

## W.W. HASTINGS HOSPITAL

Broke ground on April 6, 2023 on the new W.W. Hastings Hospital in Tahlequah, OK with a new facility to serve growing needs, develop regional capacity for inpatient care and accommodate for increasing number of births. This is a \$470 million investment and will replace the nearly 40-year-old aging W.W. Hastings Hospital in Tahlequah. The new hospital will have a connecting bridge to the existing Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center. The Hospital is set to be open and fully operation in early 2026.



## PHYSICIAN RESIDENCY

In 2023, CNHS expanded the opportunities for physicians to complete residency training within Cherokee Nation with the addition of a Family Medicine and Pediatric Residency. The Cherokee Nation Family Medicine Residency Program offers Primary Care Track emphasis on a three-year curriculum as outlined by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

### 2023 Patient age breakdown

0-18 years – 25,955

19-45 years – 39,442

46-64 years – 25,476

65-80 years – 14,263

81+ years – 2,773



57,163

Patient visits to the  
emergency and urgent care  
departments in 2023



1,167

Calls ran by the Cherokee  
Nation EMS program  
in 2023



1,847,591

Prescriptions were filled by  
pharmacy services in 2023



4,028

Surgical procedures  
performed at W.W. Hastings  
Hospital in 2023



140,451

Contract referrals processed with  
a 97% approval rate by contract  
health in 2023



102,182

Patient visits to Cherokee  
Nation Dental Services in  
2023



## W.W. HASTINGS HOSPITAL

On May 1, W.W. Hastings Hospital began offering inpatient dialysis services, starting with inpatient hemodialysis treatments. This new service line allows patients to receive on-site treatment rather than traveling for care. Acute hemodialysis (HD) and acute peritoneal dialysis (PD) are used to treat inpatients with acute kidney failure and those with chronic kidney failure who have other admitting diagnosis but are hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis dependent. W.W. Hastings Hospital now has 3 Tablo HD machines and 3 Baxter PD cyclers. In 2023, there were 177 HD treatments performed in the inpatient setting.

Many of our patient population within this community have chronic kidney disease, often requiring hemodialysis to clean the patient's blood. One important factor related to the motivation of adding this service line was keeping the patient closer to home where they are more comfortable and close to family and friends for support.

Primary stroke certification for WWH. W.W. Hastings Hospital is now Primary Stroke Center Certified, a designation meaning the tribe has the health staff and resources dedicated to the prevention and treatment of strokes. Hastings is the first tribally-operated hospital accredited by Det Norske Veritas, the international organization that certifies its quality management system. As a Primary Stroke Center, W.W. Hastings Hospital has the necessary staffing, infrastructure and programs to treat most emergent stroke patients. Hastings can also provide treatment for more extensive stroke conditions and are able to deliver some acute therapies, as well as admit patients to a designated stroke unit or reserve beds specifically for stroke care.

Highlight Hastings EMS provides emergency response on the Tahlequah Health Campus and provides interfacility transport for patients at WWH.



50,174

Total visits for CN Behavioral Health patients in 2023



895

Babies delivered at W.W. Hastings Hospital in 2023



16,799

Women screened for breast cancer in 2023



50,174

Women screened for cervical cancer in 2023



895

Clients received dietary services in 2023



# 2023 Accolades and Accreditations

Cherokee Nation Hepatitis C Elimination Program featured in CDC report for its high cure rate. Cherokee Nation was recognized by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in their Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) for the Hepatitis C Virus Elimination Program. The report was co-authored by Whitney Essex, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, and Dr. Jorge R. Mera, MD. CNHS's Hepatitis C Elimination Program can be used as a model for other health systems serving AI/AN persons; however, barriers to HCV treatment initiation need to be addressed to achieve HCV elimination.

The Cherokee Nation is taking more innovative steps to address the opioid epidemic across the Cherokee Nation Reservation, opening the new Cherokee Nation Harm Reduction Program in Tahlequah. The facility provides sterile syringes, wound care supplies, Naloxone, recovery support and other life-saving resources to provide immediate help to those most in need. It is accessible to both tribal and non-tribal citizens, ages 18 and over, and it has already successfully served almost 500 people. Now, our latest effort is a Harm Reduction Mobile Van, which will extend a helping hand across our 7,000-square-mile reservation.



Rendering of new Cherokee Nation W.W.  
Hastings Hospital.



## 2023 Accolades and Accreditations

The CDC renewed the Cherokee Nation National Diabetes Prevention Program as full recognition plus through 2028. The National Diabetes Prevention Program is a partnership of public and private organizations working to prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes. Partners make it easier for people at risk for Type 2 diabetes to participate in evidence-based lifestyle change programs to reduce their risk of Type 2 diabetes. The CNHS program is one year long, and each participant receives a lifestyle coach, a weight loss and activity goal, tools and supplies to help them reach their goals thought out the year, and much more.

Several CNHS nurses have been nominated for the 2023 Heroes in Action Awards. These awards are to honor the many health care heroes who work tirelessly for the health of moms and babies. The 2023 March of Dimes Heroes in Action honorees include nurses and maternal and infant health providers who save lives every day. Among many highly qualified applications that were received, four of our CNHS employees were selected as finalists!

# 2023 Accolades and Accreditations

CNHS Presents Our Stroke Program at the DNV Healthcare Symposium. Two CNHS employees presented our Stroke Program at the 2023 DNV Healthcare Symposium in Salt Lake City. The DNV Symposium provides attendees across the world with a platform to receive information on current and emerging healthcare issues. CNHS was selected among hundreds of entries. Our CNHS representatives took center stage to talk about our journey, who we are, why stroke care is important to us, and how we have sustained achievements. Seven of our Cherokee Nation Health Services Nurses were recognized in The Great 100 Nurses

Celebration of Oklahoma. This award recognizes nurses for their concern of humanity, significant contribution to the profession of nursing and the mentoring of others.

The Oklahoma City Area (OCA) Indian Health Services (IHS) recognized the recipients of the 2023 OCA IHS Area Director's Indian Health Service, Tribal, and Urban (I/T/U) Awards. They acknowledged the distinguished service and tireless efforts of colleagues to improve the health and well-being of American Indian and Alaskan Native patients and communities.

# Cherokee Nation

## Health Services Directory

918-453-5000 • 800-256-0671

### Hospital

W.W. Hastings Hospital (Tahlequah) 918-458-3100

### Health Centers

A-Mo Health Center (Salina) 918-434-8500  
 Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center (Tahlequah) 539-234-1000  
 Cooweescoowee Health Center (Ochelata) 918-535-6000  
 Redbird Smith Health Center (Sallisaw) 918-775-9159  
 Sam Hider Health Center (Jay) 918-253-1700  
 Three Rivers Health Center (Muskogee) 918-781-6500  
 Vinita Health Center (Vinita) 918-256-4800  
 Will Rogers Health Center (Nowata) 918-273-7500  
 Wilma P. Mankiller Health Center (Stilwell) 918-696-8800

### Services

Audiology	Pediatrics
Behavioral Health	Pharmacy
Contract Health	Podiatry
Dentistry	Community Health Nursing
Electrocardiogram	Radiology
Emergency Services	Rehabilitation Services
Eye Care Services	Respiratory
H.E.L.P. Clinic	Sleep Study
Intensive Care Unit	Social Services
Internal Medicine/Family Medicine/	Specialty Clinic
Primary Care	Surgery Clinic
Laboratory	Surgery Services
Medical/Surgical	Transport Services
Nutrition	Urgent Care
OB/Newborn Patient	Women, Infants and Children
Occupational Health	Women's Health/Gynecology
Orthopedics	

\*Services vary by location





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