



Osage Health Newsletter

LATEST HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS, ACTIVITIES, AND HAPPENINGS

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- Welcome J. Steward, LFMT, to ONCC
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Health & Wellness Topics

The very latest of a variety of Health & Wellness topics happening today.

Sovereignty in Action: Osage Nation Celebrates Ribbon Cutting of New Wahzhazhe Health Center



Si-Si A-Pe-Txa Board Chairwoman, Cindra Shangreau cuts the ribbon of the New Wahzhazhe Health Center on Tuesday, July 15, 2025. Credit: Osage News

In a proud moment of tribal sovereignty and self-determination, the Osage Nation officially celebrated the grand opening of the Wahzhazhe Health Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony held on tribal lands. This historic event brought together leaders, citizens, and healthcare professionals for a day of powerful remarks, reflection, and community celebration.

The program began with an invocation from Mr. Vann Bighorse, followed by warm introductions of honored guests. Principal Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear delivered heartfelt remarks highlighting the Nation's commitment to reclaiming control of its healthcare systems and investing in the long-term wellness of its people. Members of the Osage Congress and the Si-Si A-

Pe-Txa Board of Directors stood alongside him in solidarity and celebration.

Congressional leadership played a central role in the ceremony. Chairwoman Cindra Shangreau and 2nd Speaker Otto Hamilton offered remarks, both reflecting on the importance of this achievement for the Osage people. Former Congressional Representative and devoted health advocate Paula Stabler also spoke, reminding all in attendance that this milestone is not just about a building—it represents sovereignty in action. Stabler and Shangreau each emphasized that the successful realization of the Wahzhazhe Health Center is a shining example of what can be accomplished when tribal nations take control of their own future.

The Osage Nation Health System extends

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Sovereignty in Action: Osage Nation Celebrates Ribbon Cutting of New Wahzhazhe Health Center

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a heartfelt expression of gratitude to those who first envisioned this project, to those who have supported it along the way, and to all who continue to work for its success.

Construction teams, project partners, and supporting staff were recognized for their contributions and dedication.

The event concluded with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by tours of the state-of-the-art facility and a reception featuring hors d'oeuvres and refreshments. The Wahzhazhe Health Center serves as a testament to tribal strength, leadership, and the enduring power of Native sovereignty.



Principal Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear gives his remarks with the message that together the Osage people are stronger. Credit: Osage News



Osage Congress Second Speaker Otto Hamilton. Credit: Osage News



Si-Si A-Pe-Txa Board of Directors; Vice Chairman, Michael Bristow, Chairwoman Cindra Shangreau, Member Tim Shallow. Credit: Osage News



The audience included Osage Congress Members, Si-Si A-Pe-Txa Board of directors and Indian Health Services officials. Credit: Osage News



Osage Nation Health System, CEO Mark Rogers giving opening remarks and making introductions. Credit: Osage News



Chairwoman Shangreau and Chief Standing Bear. Credit: Osage News

Omaha Tribal Council and Staff Visits the Osage Nation Counseling Center Campus in Hopes to Grow Their Program

Leaders from the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska (OT), including members of the Carl T. Curtis Health Education Center, Tribal Council Vice-Chairman, Leander Merrick, and Tribal Council Secretary Cheyenne Robinson, recently visited the Osage Nation Counseling Center (ONCC) campus to learn about Osage Nation's innovative behavioral health services and explore opportunities to grow their own programs.

The visit, which took place Tuesday, July 8, was a step toward strengthening Native-led mental health care. The Omaha delegation—including staff from the tribe's Alcohol & Drug Program and leadership from the Carl T. Curtis Health Center—toured the ONCC's Primary Residential Treatment Center to observe operations, programming, and the supportive infrastructure established under the Osage Nation Health System (ONHS).

"We were honored to host the Omaha Tribe," said ONHS CEO Mark Rogers. The visit was



From left to right: Mark Rogers, (Osage Health System CEO), Michael Parker (OT), Cheyenne Robinson (Omaha Tribal Council Secretary), Kirk Shaw (Chief Operating Officer COO of ONHS), Samuel Grant, LADC at Omaha Tribe Alcohol & Drug Program, Tamara Holden (ONHS Compliance Officer), Chery Sheridan (OT), Latrisha Grant (OT), Brittany Parker (OT), Laura Brooks (ONCC Program Manager), Lorenita Merrick (OT) and Leander Merrick, Omaha Tribe Vice-Chairman.

filled with meaningful dialogue, shared knowledge, and a mutual commitment to community wellness.

The Omaha delegation expressed deep appreciation for the warm hospitality and left inspired by ONHS's commitment to culturally grounded, trauma-informed healing. Their hope is to bring similar services to their own community with support from tribal programs like ONCC.



PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

Talisha (Tish) Furst, Family Nurse Practitioner, graduated with a Master of Science in Nursing from Creighton University in 2015. She had previously worked as an RN in multiple areas of nursing after graduating from Missouri Western State University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Ms. Furst has worked as an ER Provider, inpatient ICU during the COVID pandemic, and as a hospitalist. Primary Care is her favorite as she enjoys talking with patients and their families, guiding them to achieve their best health. Tish is board-certified in Family Medicine through the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners.





OSAGE NATION HEALTH SYSTEM
A Culture of Caring



BACK-TO-SCHOOL SPORTS PHYSICALS, IMMUNIZATIONS, AND WELL-CHILD CHECKS

Wednesday, July 30th from 1pm - 4:30pm

Call Us for an appointment 918.287.9300

**Eligibility: New and Current Native
American Patients.**

As the new school year approaches, it's time to check off three of the most important items on your back-to-school list. Students planning to play school sports must have a physical after May 1st.

Services Available:

- ✓ Required childhood & adolescent immunizations
- ✓ Sports physical exams
- ✓ Well-child checks



**At our new location
Wahzhazhe Health Center
316 E. Main Street, Pawhuska**



Healing Wounds, Honoring Stories: PTSD Awareness

By Joshua Steward, LMFT, Osage Nation Counseling Center



Teal ribbon awareness on woman's hand for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Photo: @Istock / Credit: Chinnapong

As we observe PTSD Awareness Month this July, it's vital to acknowledge not only the invisible wounds of trauma but also the communal paths to healing. As a Marriage and Family Therapist, I often witness how trauma doesn't just live in the individual, it echoes through marriages, families, and generations. Let us remember that healing and strength can be shared as well.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) impacts countless individuals, often leaving them feeling isolated, ashamed, and stuck in patterns that harm both self and relationships. In therapy we offer a proven framework to challenge distorted beliefs shaped by trauma, helping individuals take back their control and rebuild trust. Yet truer healing happens when these insights are integrated into a community of support.

Native American tribal customs here in Oklahoma provide a powerful example of this. Among many tribes, storytelling, ritual, and

community ceremonies create sacred spaces for individuals to process grief and trauma together. These culturally centered practices affirm the wounded person's place in the community, reminding them they are not alone or broken, but human and still part of the circle.

Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered program, echoes this principle. Through shared testimonies and structured steps, individuals find hope, accountability and freedom in the context of spiritual and relational safety. This aligns beautifully with God's healing; that truth, responsibility, and meaningful connection are vital antidotes to the chaos trauma can unleash.

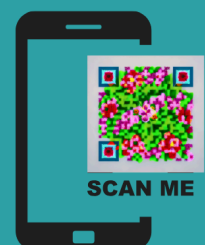
For couples and families, it's essential to recognize that PTSD doesn't make someone unlovable or permanently damaged. Rather, it signals that something painful has overwhelmed their system and now calls for understanding, boundaries, and healing relationships. Family members can support one another by learning trauma-informed tools, practicing patient communication, and engaging in communal healing practices, whether through therapy, church, or cultural tradition.

This month, may we honor the resilience of those living with PTSD. Let's listen to their stories, walk beside them, and build systems both at home and in our communities where healing is not only possible, but shared. Real Talk. Real Change. Real Hope.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

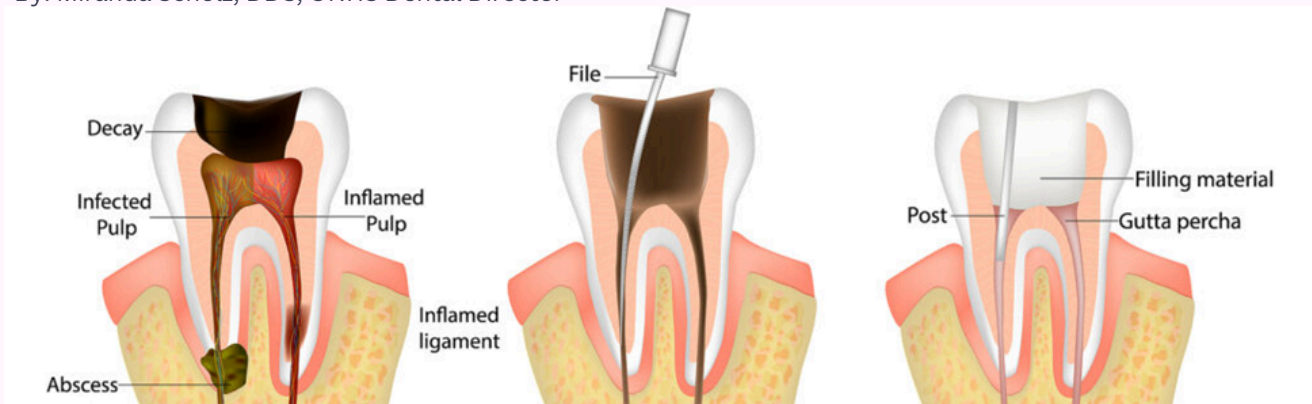
Learn about Osage Health Watch's mission to empower listeners with valuable information, resources, and inspiring stories—promoting health advocacy and positive change within Indigenous communities.



Follow OHW on Facebook, Instagram, X, Spotify, and YouTube to stay connected and informed!

Are Root Canals Safe?

By: Miranda Scholz, DDS, ONHS Dental Director



Root canals have a bad reputation as extremely painful procedures and something to avoid at all costs. Much of the blame stems from the way root canals and dentists in general are portrayed in movies and television. In reality, root canal procedures can be successful and painless, saving teeth that would otherwise be destined for extraction.

There is a small hollow space inside every tooth where the nerve and the blood supply live. The core of the tooth is called the pulp. When tooth decay reaches the pulp, the tooth becomes inflamed and can be very painful. Bacteria from the cavity can travel through the hollow canal space and cause an infection to form around the roots of the tooth below the gum level. It is not possible to complete a simple filling at this point, as we cannot put filling material directly on the nerve.

I always explain to my patients that a root canal is essentially a deep filling. A root canal removes all the decay and the pulp from the hollow canal space within the tooth. The canal space is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, and a filling material is placed throughout the entire length of the root from within. Contrary to popular belief, the tooth roots are not removed during a root canal. Modern techniques enable the procedure to be very conservative, removing only the amount of tooth structure necessary.

There is some belief that root canal therapy can contribute to cancer or cause other detrimental health outcomes. In 2013, a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that patients with multiple root canal treatments actually had a 45% reduced risk of cancer.

The American Association of Endodontists (root canal specialists) says that 25 million root canal treatments are performed every year, safely and effectively. If a link existed between root canals and cancer, we would have more than enough data available in peer-reviewed scientific publications to establish this connection. Claims that root canals are not safe are based on research that's nearly 100 years old and has long been debunked.

Root canals can be life-saving for teeth with decay or fractures, and can help prevent future bone loss and tooth abscess. This procedure yields very predictable results, with high success rates ranging from 86% to 98%, according to studies, which is exceptionally high for a medical procedure. Long-term success rates are over 90% after ten years.

It is essential to preserve your original, natural teeth whenever possible for several reasons. Natural teeth are essential for efficient chewing, maintaining normal biting force and sensation, preserving a natural appearance, and protecting surrounding teeth from excessive wear or strain. When teeth are missing, the open space can allow the neighboring teeth to drift into less than ideal positions, which makes future restoration or replacement difficult.

You wouldn't cut off your hand if you broke a finger, so why would you extract your natural tooth if it could be saved? Root canals are a safe and effective way to save teeth, and we offer this service at the WahZhaZhe Dental Clinic. Call (918) 287-9300 today to schedule your exam.

Breaking the Silence: Native American Mental Health and the Power of Speaking Up

July marks National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to spotlight the mental health needs of communities of color—including Native American and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations—who often face unique cultural and systemic barriers to care. For Indigenous peoples, this month is not just about awareness—it's about breaking the silence, honoring tradition, and building pathways toward healing.

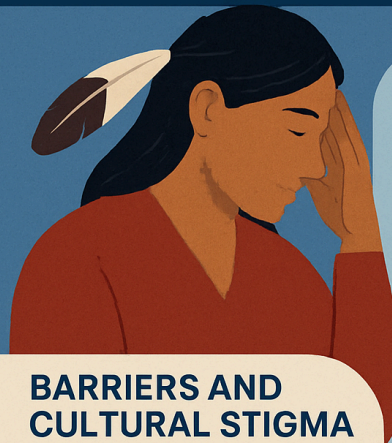
Mental health challenges disproportionately affect Native communities. According to Mental Health America, Native and Indigenous adults experience serious psychological distress at 2.5 times the rate of the general U.S. population. In 2023, 15.4% of AI/AN adults reported serious psychological distress—a significantly higher rate than any other racial group.

Even more troubling, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that AI/AN communities experience suicide at a rate of 23.8%, compared to 17.6% among White adults. Suicide remains one of the leading causes of death for Native youth, especially between ages 10–34. Despite the urgent need for care, Native Americans often face significant obstacles to accessing mental health services. According to Native News Online, cultural stigma surrounding mental illness is one of the biggest barriers—mental health struggles are often viewed as weakness or shameful, leading many to suffer in silence.

Additionally, many Native people prefer traditional healing practices such as

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

BREAKING STIGMA: NATIVE AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH



A CRISIS HIDDEN BY SILENCE

- Serious psychological distress affects Native/Indigenous people at 2.5x the rate of the general population.¹
- 15.4% of American Indian/Alaska Native adults experienced serious psychological distress in 2023
- AI/AN adults have a 23.8% suicide rate, compared to 17.6% for White adults

BARRIERS AND CULTURAL STIGMA

- Mental illness often carries shame in Native communities
- Traditional healing practices are often preferred over Western care
- Limited access to culturally competent care

Systemic racism, historical trauma, and socioeconomic disparities persist.

Systemic racism, historical trauma, and socioeconomic disparities persist.

TURNING STIGMA INTO STRENGTH

- Open conversation about mental health.
- Share resources like workshops, online clinics, telehealth
- Honor culture through language and ceremony.
- Advocate systemically for improved funding and sovereignty.

ceremonies, prayer, and community support over Western mental health models. While these practices are deeply effective and culturally rooted, they are often not recognized or supported by mainstream healthcare systems.

Compounding the issue is a lack of access to culturally competent providers. The Indian Health Service (IHS) remains underfunded and understaffed, with fewer mental health professionals per capita than national averages, according to SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

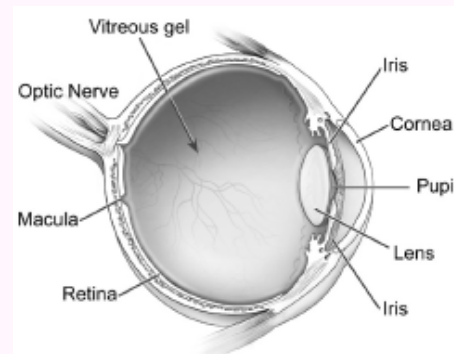
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Don't Lose Site of Cataract.

By: National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health

1.) What is a cataract?

When the lens of your eye gets cloudy, it is called a cataract. It can cause vision loss in one or both eyes. It cannot spread from one eye to the other.



2.) What causes a cataract?

The lenses of the eyes are made mostly of water and protein. As we age, some of this protein may clump together and cloud the lenses of our eyes. Over time, this “cloud” may grow and cover more of the lens. This makes it harder to see. Smoking, alcohol use, diabetes, and prolonged exposure to the sun can also cause cataract.

3.) When are you most likely to have cataract?

Older people mostly get cataracts. But people in their 40s and 50s may get them, especially if the eye has been injured. The risk of having a cataract increases after age 60, and by age 80, more than half of all Americans will have a cataract or will have had cataract surgery.

Normal vision



A scene as it might be viewed by a person with cataract.



4.) What are the symptoms of a cataract?

When you first get a cataract, you may not notice much change. Your vision may become blurry, as if looking through a foggy window. Or colors may not appear as bright as they once did. As the “cloud” over the lens of your eye grows, it may be harder for you to read. You may also see more glare from a lamp or car headlights at night. You may need more changes to your eyeglasses.

5.) How do I know if I have a cataract?

An eye care professional can tell if you have cataract by giving you a comprehensive dilated eye exam. During the exam, drops are placed in your eyes to widen, or dilate, the pupils. Then a special lens is used to look inside the eye. This exam may help find cataracts as well as other eye problems. After the exam, your vision may be blurry for a period of hours.

6.) When should a cataract be treated?

You should treat a cataract when it makes it hard for you to do daily tasks, like reading or driving. But first, you and your eye care professional should talk about what is best for you. You should never feel rushed to make a decision.

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Breaking the Silence: Native American Mental Health and the Power of Speaking Up

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Despite these challenges, many Native communities are leading innovative, culturally grounded solutions. Programs like the White Mountain Apache Tribe's "Celebrating Life" initiative have successfully blended traditional knowledge with modern prevention techniques to reduce youth suicide and improve access to care.

Research indicates that cultural identity serves as a protective factor. When youth are connected to their language, traditions, and ceremonies, their risk of self-harm decreases dramatically. Encouraging a connection to culture can be a vital form of mental health care in itself.

To reduce stigma and promote healing within Native communities, here are some key steps:

- Talk about it: Normalizing mental health

discussions can break the cycle of silence and shame.

- Share resources: Promote both traditional and clinical options, including telehealth access.
- Support cultural connection: Encourage engagement with language, stories, and ceremonies.
- Advocate systemically: Push for better funding, culturally aware care, and tribal-led mental health programming.

This National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, let us stand in solidarity with Native communities. Healing comes from speaking out, honoring our identities, and investing in systems that reflect our values. The time to act is now—because every mind matters.

Don't Lose Site of Cataract.

(Continued from page 8)

7.) When should a cataract be treated?

When a cataract first starts, an eye care professional may give you eyeglasses and suggest brighter lighting, antiglare sunglasses,

8.) What can you do to protect your vision?

To delay a cataract, wear sunglasses and a hat with a brim to block ultraviolet rays from the sun. Also, stop smoking and eat more leafy green vegetables, fruits, and foods with a lot of antioxidants. If you are age 60 or older, you should have a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year. In addition to cataract, your eye care professional can check for signs of other age-related eye problems such as glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration. Early treatment for these other eye diseases may save your vision.

For more information,
contact—
National Eye Institute
National Institutes of
Health
2020@nei.nih.gov
www.nei.nih.



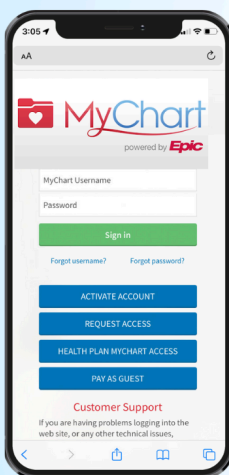
NOW OPEN!**July 15, 2025**
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 OSAGE NATION HEALTH SYSTEM


Let us share our Culture of Caring. Now Accepting New Patients.

We have a variety of services:

- Primary Care
- Dental
- Optometry
- Behavioral Health
- Diabetes & Wellness
- Growing Specialty Services
- and More!


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Pawhuska, OK. 74056 918.287.9300

MyChart
at the OSAGE NATION HEALTH SYSTEM

New Patient Portal:

- Improved access to your health information
- Communicate directly with your provider
- Request an appointment
- And more!

Install the app on iPhone or Android for real-time access to your health information

Apple version note: MyChart app versions 10.9 and above require iOS 16


Download the app

 Download on the
App Store

 GET IT ON
Google Play

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OSAGE NATION HEALTH SYSTEM
A Culture of Caring
Attention Patients:

Please bring all of your current medication bottles to your appointments. This will help our providers and nurses accurately review and enter your information into our new electronic health system, Epic.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding!



Osage Nation Health System Happenings:



"Substance Abuse Recovery Starts Here!"

OSAGE NATION COUNSELING CENTER PRIMARY RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT (PRT) CENTER

ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE SEEKING SUPPORT FOR RECOVERY FROM DRUG OR ALCOHOL ADDICTION? THE OSAGE NATION PRIMARY RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT (PRT) CENTER IS NOW ACCEPTING NEW CLIENTS, WITH SPECIAL OPENINGS AVAILABLE IN THE WOMEN'S RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM!

- 90-Day Residential Program
- For Native Americans (with CDIB)
- Culturally Based Healing Approaches
- Safe, Supportive Environment
- Located at New Osage Nation Counseling Campus



TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD HEALING. "RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE!"



OSAGE NATION HEALTH SYSTEM
COUNSELING CENTER

473 Elks Lodge Road, Pawhuska, OK. 74056
539.212.2499 / Osagehealth.org



ATTENTION PATIENTS:

As we come into the new year, we request all patients please bring all insurance cards in for every appointment. This includes dental, vision, medical cards, and Medicare cards.



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Questions? Call Patient Registration
918.287.9300

**OUTDOOR FAMILY
MOVIE NIGHT**
FRIDAY, AUGUST 15
8:00 PM
OSAGE NATION OUTDOOR
HEALTH COMPLEX
PREVENTION DEPARTMENT
539.212.2521



**OSAGE NATION
HEALTH SYSTEM**
A Culture of Caring

Accredited by
AAAHC
ACCREDITATION ASSOCIATION
for AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE, INC.



On our website you can see department resources and information, upcoming ONHS events, make inquiries and so much more. Follow the Osage Nation Health System on facebook for the official announcement.

OUR WEBSITE IS NOW LIVE!!



www.osagehealth.org



SCAN ME

Observances for July and August

July:

- Cord Blood Awareness Month
- Group B Strep Awareness Month
- Healthy Vision Month
- Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month
- National Cleft & Craniofacial Awareness & Prevention Month
- UV Safety
- Sarcoma Awareness Month

August:

- Children's Eye Health and Safety Month
- Digestive Tract Paralysis Awareness Month
- Gastroparesis Awareness Month
- National Breastfeeding Month
- National Immunization Awareness Month
- Psoriasis Action Month

Days to Note:

- World Hepatitis Day - July 28
- World Breastfeeding Week - Aug. 1 - 7
- National Health Cancer Week - Aug. 4 - 10
- OSHA's Safe and Sound Week - Aug. 12 - 18

WE'RE HIRING

Cultivating Compassion: Join Us in Growing Our Culture of Caring!

APPLY NOW









FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION

MONDAY- FRIDAY 8AM TO 4:30PM:
539-212-2411
24 HOUR CRISIS LINE:
866-897-4747

ADDRESS:
 1201 E. 11TH STREET, PAWHUSKA, OK 74056
 EMAIL:
FAMILYVIOLENCE@OSAGEHEALTH.ORG



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Wahzhazhe Health Center
918.287.9300

Title VI 539.212.2510
Prevention 539.212.2521
ONHS Security 539.212.2559

Family Violence Prevention (FVP)
539.212.2506
FVP 24/7 Crisis Hotline
866.897.4747

24/7 Suicide Crisis Lifeline:
988

ONHS Counseling Center
M-F 8a-4:30p
539.212.2499

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE