

Osage Health Newsletter

LATEST HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS, ACTIVITIES, AND HAPPENINGS

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Health & Wellness Topics

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

Osage Nation Health System Welcomes New Leadership and Clinical Professionals to Osage Nation Counseling Center



Wahzhazhe Health Center

The Osage Nation Health System (ONHS) is pleased to announce the addition of three accomplished healthcare professionals to the Osage Nation Counseling Center (ONCC), strengthening leadership and clinical services across residential behavioral health and treatment programs.

Chris Larkin, MBA, FACHE, CHC, has joined ONHS as the Executive Director of the Osage Nation Counseling Center, which includes the Primary Residential Treatment Center. Mr. Larkin brings extensive executive leadership experience spanning tribal, nonprofit, for-profit, military, and critical access healthcare systems. A Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and a Certified Healthcare Compliance professional, Mr. Larkin holds a Master's of Businss Administration from Northeast-

ern State University, graduating summa cum laude. He also served 13 years in the United States Air Force Reserve, attaining the rank of Major as a Senior Health Services Administrator. His Leadership reflects a strong commitment to quality, compl-iance, and patent-centered behavioral health care.

Joining ONHS is Dr. Nancy Murphy, a board-certified psychiatrist who will be providing services at the Osage Nation Counseling Center campus. Dr. Murphy completed her medical education at Oklahoma State University, followed by a family medicine internship and a four-year psychiatry residency at the University of Oklahoma. **Board-certified** the by American Board of Psychiatry Neurology, Dr. Murphy brings a holistic

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Osage Nation Health System Welcomes New Leadership and Clinical Professionals to Osage Nation Counseling Center

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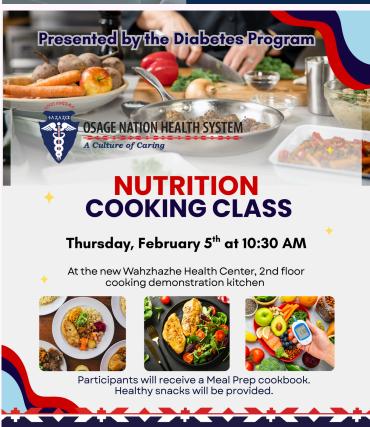
and patient-centered approach to mental health care shaped by a diverse professional background and a lifelong commitment to service.

"These additions reflect our continued commitment to strengthening behavioral health services and expanding access to high-quality, culturally responsive care for the Osage Nation and tribal communities." said ONHS leadership.

Also joining the Counseling Center team is Nick Foster, RN, BSN, who will serve at the Primary Residential Treatment Center. Mr. Foster brings more than 33 years of nursing experience, with a professional background focused rehabilitation, patient safety, and collaborative care environments. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Oklahoma Wesleyan University and is dedicated to fostering excellence in clinical practice while supporting both patients and staff through compassionate, team-based care.

The Osage Nation Health System welcomes Mr. Larkin, Mr. Foster, and Dr. Murphy. We look forward to the positive impact their experience and leadership will have on the Osage Nation Counseling Center and the individuals and families it serves.





316 E. Main Street, Pawhuska

539.212.2373

Walking Forward Together: Realistic Health Goals for the New Year



Health System (ONHS) encourages community members to approach health goals with compassion, realism, and cultural strength. Native American and Alaska Native adults experience some of the highest rates of chronic disease in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Native adults are more than twice as likely to have diabetes compared to non-Hispanic white adults, and heart disease remains a leading cause of death across Native communities. High cholesterol, high blood pressure, and related conditions often occur alongside diabetes, increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke. These disparities are not the result of individual choices alone, but of longbarriers to care, food access challenges, stress, and historical trauma. This New Year, ONHS encourages resolutions focused on small, sustainable steps that support long-term wellness rather than perfection.

- 1. Focus on Progress, Not Perfection Managing diabetes, cholesterol, or heart ONHS nutrition and diabetes education disease does not require extreme diets or drastic changes. Small, consistent choices can make a meaningful difference over time, including:
- Choosing water instead of sugary drinks once or twice a day
- Reducing portion sizes rather than eliminating foods
- Adding one healthier option to meals, such as vegetables or lean protein

- As the New Year begins, the Osage Nation 2. Incorporate Movement Into Everyday Life Physical activity does not have to mean a gym membership. Movement rooted in daily life and culture can support heart health and blood sugar control, such as:
 - Walking with family or friends
 - Gardening, yard work, or outdoor chores
 - Dancing, stretching, or light strength activities
 - Participating in traditional or community activities

Even 10–15 minutes of movement per day can help lower blood sugar, improve cholesterol, and reduce stress.

3. Eat for Strength, Not Restriction

Food is culture and medicine. Rather than giving up traditional foods, focus on balance and preparation methods that support health:

- Choosing baked, grilled, or roasted foods more often
- Increasing vegetables, beans, and lean proteins
- Limiting added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats when possible
- Reading food labels to make informed choices

services are available to help community members adapt meals while honoring cultural traditions.

4. Make Preventive Care a Priority

Many chronic conditions have few early symptoms. Scheduling routine care can help prevent complications and support long-term wellness:

- A1C testing for diabetes management
- Cholesterol and blood pressure screenings

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Recovery, Hope, and Healing: Support Through the Holidays and Into the New Year

The holiday season and the transition into a new year can be a difficult time for many individuals and families. While this time of year is often associated with celebration and togetherness, it can also bring increased stress, grief, loneliness, financial strain, and emotional challenges. For those struggling with substance use or mental health concerns, these pressures may overwhelming.

At the Osage Nation Health System (ONHS), we want our community to know this important message: you are not alone, help is available, and recovery is possible. The first step toward healing is often the hardest—asking for help—but it is also the most powerful.

The Connection Between Substance Use and **Mental Health**

Substance use and mental health challenges are closely connected. Feelings of depression, anxiety, trauma, or unresolved grief can increase the risk of substance misuse, and substance use can, in turn, worsen mental health symptoms. During the holidays, disrupted routines, social expectations, and reminders of loss can intensify these struggles. Recovery is not a sign of weakness—it is a sign of strength. Seeking support is an act of courage, and no one should have to face these challenges alone.

If You or Someone You Love Needs Immediate Support

If you or someone you know is experiencing emotional distress, thoughts of self-harm, or a substance-related crisis, confidential help is available 24/7:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

- Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org
- Support is free, confidential, and available at any time.
- SAMHSA National Helpline (Substance Use & Mental Health)
- 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- Provides treatment referrals and information, 24/7.
- Poison Control (Substance or medication emergencies) 1-800-222-1222

are in immediate danger, call 911.

Local Support Through Osage Nation Counseling Center

The Osage Nation Counseling Center, part of ONHS, provides comprehensive, affordable, and compassionate services for individuals and families seeking support for substance use, mental health concerns, recovery, or family violence. Hospitality and respect are extended to all, and services are provided in a safe, secure environment that promotes healthy living.

We serve all residents of Osage County, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation. We accept SoonerCare for most services, and Osage Nation members may receive services at no cost in some cases, helping remove financial barriers to care.

How We Can Help

Our Counseling Center offers professional outpatient treatment for substance use and mental health issues. Services are provided by a highly qualified team, including Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselors, Licensed Alcohol Counselors, and Licensed Professional Counselors. Our approach focuses on reducing symptoms, restoring daily functioning, and supporting recovery with the least disruption to everyday life possible. Every person struggling with addiction or mental health challenges deserves access to care that enhances quality of life and long-term stability. We provide coordinated services addressing:

- Substance use and addiction
- Depression, anxiety, and emotional distress
- Co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders
- Trauma, domestic violence, and abuse
- Family and interpersonal challenges
- Youth and adolescent behavioral health needs

The Counseling Center also has two nationally certified, trauma-focused therapists on staff and works closely with District and Tribal Courts, DHS, Oklahoma Juvenile Affairs (OJA), and Indian Child Welfare (ICW).

Primary Residential Treatment (PRT) Program For individuals needing a higher level of care, the Reaching out during a crisis can save lives. If you Osage Nation Primary Residential Treatment (PRT) Center offers a 90-day residential drug and alcohol treatment program for men and women.

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Protecting Children from Button Battery Hazards



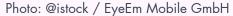




Photo: @istock / anuarak phraisan

December Is National Safe Toys and Gifts Month

December is recognized as National Safe Toys and Gifts Month, making it an important time for families to review toy and household safety as new gifts, electronics, and decorations enter the home. At the Osage Nation Health System (ONHS), protecting the health and safety of our children is a top priority. One often-overlooked hazard is button batteries—small, coin-shaped batteries commonly found in toys, remote controls, singing greeting cards, watches, hearing aids, holiday decorations, and other household devices.

Although small, button batteries pose a serious and potentially life-threatening risk if swallowed or inserted into a child's nose or ears.

Why Button Batteries Are Dangerous

When a button battery becomes lodged in a child's esophagus or digestive tract, it can trigger a chemical reaction that creates an electrical current. This reaction can cause severe burns in as little as two hours, leading to perforation

of the esophagus, internal bleeding, long-term complications, or death if not removed quickly (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia). Because these batteries are shiny and small, they are especially appealing to young children who naturally explore objects with their mouths (HealthyChildren.org).

Symptoms to Watch For

Symptoms may vary and can include:

- Drooling or excessive saliva
- Difficulty swallowing or refusal to eat or drink
- Pain in the throat, chest, or abdomen
- Coughing, gagging, or choking
- Vomiting or unusual irritability
- Changes in voice or breathing
- Bloody or dark stools

If any of these symptoms occur, seek emergency medical care immediately (Baptist Health).

Important: Symptoms may appear quickly or be subtle at first. Serious injury can occur before obvious signs develop. Do not delay care if ingestion is suspected (Poison Control).

Walking Forward Together: Realistic Health Goals for the New Year

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- Eye and foot exams for those living with diabetes
- Routine primary care checkups
- Preventive care is an essential step in protecting both individual and family health.

5. Care for Mental and Emotional Health Stress, grief, and trauma directly affect physical health and can make chronic disease management more difficult. Supporting mental well-being is essential:

- Talking with a counselor or behavioral health provider
- Managing stress through rest, prayer, mindfulness, or time outdoors
- Asking for help when feeling overwhelmed
- Setting healthy boundaries
- ONHS behavioral health and counseling services are available to support individuals and families.

6. Lean on Family and Community
Health journeys are stronger when shared.
Community support has always been a source of strength in Native cultures:

- Walking or exercising with a friend
- Cooking meals together as a family
- Attending ONHS wellness programs or community events
- Sharing goals and encouragement with loved ones

Health is not about giving up culture—it is about honoring the body, protecting future generations, and strengthening mind, body, and spirit. This New Year, ONHS invites the community to set a simple but powerful goal: take one step toward better health and keep going. Small steps, supported by care and community, lead to lasting wellness.

Recovery, Hope, and Healing: Support Through the Holidays and Into the New Year

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Administered by the Osage Nation Counseling Center, PRT was developed to support Native Americans in building a substance-free lifestyle through structured care, cultural grounding, and recovery-focused support.

Family Violence & Crisis Support

Osage Nation Behavioral Health also provides family violence services, empowering individuals to rebuild their lives and break cycles of intergenerational trauma.

24-Hour Crisis Line: 866.897.4747

Available 24/7. Calls and texts are handled with confidentiality and safety as the highest priority.

Healing does not happen overnight, and recovery is not a straight path—but every step forward matters. Whether you are struggling personally or supporting someone you love, help is available, and you are worthy of care, compassion, and healing.

This holiday season and into the new year, remember:

You are not alone. The first step toward recovery is asking for help.

Contact Information

Osage Nation Counseling Center & Primary Residential Treatment Program

Phone: **539.212.2499**

Address: **473 Elks Lodge Road, Pawhuska, OK 74056** / Website: **OsageHealth.org**



Protecting Children from Button Battery Hazards

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What to Do If You Suspect Ingestion

- Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately—this is a medical emergency.
- Do not induce vomiting or give food or drinks unless instructed by medical professionals.
- Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 for immediate guidance.
- Acting quickly can prevent severe injury and save a child's life.

Toy and Gift Safety Tips for Families

As part of National Safe Toys and Gifts Month, ONHS encourages families to take the following steps:

- Choose age-appropriate toys and follow all safety warnings.
- Inspect toys and household items for loose or accessible batteries.
- Ensure battery compartments are secured with screws.
- Keep spare and used batteries locked away and out of reach.
- Tape used batteries before recycling or disposal.
- Supervise young children during play and educate older children about battery safety.

At Osage Nation Health System, we are committed to keeping our children safe, healthy, and protected—during the holiday season and all year long.

Sources: Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; HealthyChildren.org (American Academy of Pediatrics); Baptist Health; Poison Control; U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.





Nourishing a Healthy New Year: Nutrition, Movement, and Wellness in 2026

As we step into 2026, the Osage Nation Health System (ONHS) encourages our community to begin the new year with a renewed focus on nutrition, movement, and overall wellness. A healthy start does not require perfection—it begins with small, intentional choices that support the body, mind, and spirit at every stage of life. Through our Diabetes and Wellness Department, Elder Nutrition Program, and Osage Nation Fitness Centers, ONHS is proud to provide resources that empower individuals and families to build healthier routines and long-term well-being.

What a Well-Balanced Nutrition Plan Looks Like

A well-balanced approach to nutrition focuses on fueling the body with a variety of foods that provide essential nutrients while supporting energy, strength, and disease prevention. Rather than restrictive dieting, balanced nutrition emphasizes consistency, moderation, and mindful choices.

Key components of a balanced plate include:

- Lean proteins such as fish, poultry, beans, eggs, and lean meats to support muscle health and repair
- Whole grains like brown rice, wholewheat bread, oats, and corn to provide lasting energy and fiber
- Healthy fats from sources such as nuts, seeds, avocados, and oils to support heart and brain health
- Adequate hydration, primarily from water, to support digestion and overall body function



Photo: @istock / MillefloreImages

Balanced nutrition also means paying attention to portion sizes, limiting highly processed foods and added sugars, and choosing foods that support blood sugar control, heart health, and digestive wellness. Our Diabetes and Wellness team and Elder Nutrition staff are available to provide education and guidance tailored to individual health needs.

The Importance of Annual Physicals and Updated Labs

Nutrition and wellness are not one-size-fits-all. Health needs can change over time, which is why ONHS encourages patients to schedule annual physical exams and updated laboratory testing. These visits help identify concerns such as elevated blood sugar, cholesterol levels, blood pressure changes, vitamin deficiencies, or other conditions that may benefit from early intervention.

Annual checkups and labs provide valuable information that allows patients and providers to:

- Develop personalized nutrition and wellness plans
- Monitor chronic conditions such as diabetes or heart disease
- Adjust medications or lifestyle strategies as needed
- Prevent complications through early detection

Nourishing a Healthy New Year: Nutrition, Movement, and Wellness in 2026 (Continued from page 8)

Making an appointment is an important step in taking ownership of your health and ensuring you have the knowledge needed to address your individual wellness goals.

Diabetes and Wellness: Supporting Whole- Person Health

Diabetes Wellness The ONHS and Department offers comprehensive services focused diabetes management, on prevention, overall wellness. and experienced combines clinical team expertise with a holistic approach that recognizes the vital connection between nutrition, movement, and education.

Services include:

- Free glucose monitoring supplies
- Diabetic fitness programs
- Nutritional education and lifestyle counseling
- Free membership to the ONHS Fitness Center
- Diabetic shoes, when eligible

Our goal is to empower patients with practical tools and knowledge that promote confidence, independence, and long-term health.

Honoring Our Elders Through Nutrition and Movement

The Osage Nation Elder Nutrition Program serves senior citizens with the greatest economic and social needs, including those who are low-income, frail, impaired, geographically or socially isolated, or non-English speaking. The program's mission is to improve quality of life by fostering dignity, pride, and connection through nutrition services and wellness support.

In addition to nutrition assistance, the program promotes healthy aging through safe, accessible senior fitness opportunities, including:

- Chair exercise classes
- Chair ballet classes
- Weekly group exercise sessions in Pawhuska and Fairfax

These activities help improve balance, mobility, flexibility, and social engagement—important elements of independence and fall prevention.

Elder Nutrition Program Contact:

Program Director: Amy Dobbins

Phone: **539.212.2510** Fax: **918.287.1165**

Osage Nation Fitness Centers: Movement for Every Stage of Life

The Osage Nation Fitness Centers support chronic disease prevention and overall wellness through structured fitness programs and professional guidance. Specialized training is available and may be recommended by our Nationally Accredited Certified Personal Trainers.

Training options include:

- One-on-one personal training
- Small group training
- Strength and weight loss programs
- Functional fitness and balance training (ABLE Bodies)
- Youth and adolescent training (JrFit)
- Olympic weightlifting and kettlebell training
- Muscle imbalance treatment

Fitness Center Director: Hank Powell

Phone: 918.287.5421

Email: hpowell@osagenation-nsn.gov

Locations:

• Pawhuska: 1222 Lynn Ave.

• Hominy: 1105 S. Eastern St.

• Fairfax: 255 North 1st St.

A Healthy Start for a Stronger 2026

As we move into the new year, ONHS remains committed to supporting wellness at every age. Whether you are improving nutrition, increasing physical activity, managing diabetes, or supporting an elder loved one, help is available. By combining balanced regular checkups, nutrition. and safe movement, our community can build a healthier future together.



PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

Todd M. Thomas, DO, is a board-certified cardiologist with Ascension St. John in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Dr. Thomas is board-certified in interventional cardiology, cardiovascular disease, adult echocardiography, and internal medicine. He specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery disease, ischemic heart disease, congestive heart failure, valvular heart disease, and peripheral arterial disease.

Dr. Thomas is committed to helping patients with heart disease live longer, healthier lives by utilizing the most current evidence-based guidelines, advanced technologies, and innovative procedures available in cardiovascular care. His patient-centered approach emphasizes both clinical excellence and compassionate care.

Dr. Thomas earned his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed his residency in internal medicine at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, followed by cardiology fellowship training at Baylor Scott & White Health and MercyOne North Iowa.

Outside of clinical practice, Dr. Thomas enjoys spending time with his wife and children, traveling, and enjoying the outdoors.







Osage Nation Health System - Pharmacy 316 E. Main Street, Pawhuska, OK. 74056 918.287.9300

December Employee Recognitions



Harrison Hudgins, Business Office -Employee of the Month



Brandi Calkins, Nursing -Special Leadership Award



Danielle Greyeyes, Patient Registration -Unsung Heroes Award



December Birthdays



December Work Anniversaries

Osage Nation Health System Employee Christmas Fun























Osage Nation Health System Department Christmas Trees



1st Place - Pharmacy



2nd Place - Dental



2nd Place - Osage Nation Counseling Center



Prevention Department -Wahzhazhe Youth Council



Family Violence Prevention



Family Violence Prevention



Facilities



Business Office



Administration



Community Health Representatives



Grants Department



Lab Department

Osage Nation Health System Department Christmas Trees



Primary Care



Optometry



Registration



Diabetes Department



Housekeeping



Purchase Referred Care



Diagnostic Imaging



Public Health Nursing



Human Resources



Elder Nutrition



I.T.





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 10.9and above require iOS 16













ATTENTION PATIENTS:

As we enter the new year, we kindly ask all patients to bring all current insurance cards to every appointment. This includes medical, dental, vision, Medicare, and any secondary insurance cards. Thank you for helping us keep your records accurate and up to date!







Questions? Call Patient Registration 918.287.9300







APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

CONFIRM APPOINTMENTS

X CANCEL APPOINTMENTS

Text START to 98041 or SCAN the QR code to OPT IN







Observances for December 2025 and January 2026:

December:

- National Safe Toys and Gifts Month
- International Sharps Injury Prevention Month

Awareness Weeks:

- National Handwashing Awareness Week: Dec. 7-13
- National Influenza Vaccination Week: Dec. 7-13

Days to Note:

- World AIDS Day: December 1
- International Day of Persons with Disability: December 3

January 2026

- · Cervical Health Awareness Month
- · National Birth Defects Prevention Month
- · National Blood Donor Month
- · National Glaucoma Awareness Month
- · Roden Awareness Month
- · Stalking Awareness Month
- · Thyroid Awareness Month
- · Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month

Awareness Weeks

- · National CRNA Week-- January 12-24 Days to Note
- · National Pharmacist Day January 12
- · National IV Nurse Day January 21
- · Maternal Health Awareness Day January 23
- · World Leprosy Day January 25



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!

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