



OSAGE NATION  
HEALTH SYSTEM

A Culture of Caring

# Osage Health Newsletter

LATEST HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS, ACTIVITIES, AND HAPPENINGS

## INSIDE

### Updates

- OHNS Expands Care and Opportunity in the New Year
- Healthy Heart Month
- February Cooking Class
- National Children’s Dental Health Month
- Update of Hominy Assisted Living Facility including QR Code Video
- February is Cancer Prevention Month

### Health & Wellness Topics

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

## Healthy Heart Month: Heart Health in Native American Communities

By Mark Rogers, SSAPT CEO



Heart shape with white carigram. Photo: @istock / dontree\_m.

February is Healthy Heart Month — a time to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease and empower individuals and families with information to protect heart health. While heart disease affects all populations in the United States, Native American communities experience unique risks and disparities that make heart health particularly vital for tribal nations.

### Heart Disease: A Leading Health Concern

Heart disease remains one of the leading causes of death among American Indian and Alaska Native adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the number one cause of death in this group, closely followed by cancer and unintentional injuries.

Research shows that American Indian and Alaska Native populations bear a heavy burden of cardiovascular disease, with

many deaths occur at younger ages compared to other racial and ethnic groups. Studies indicate that over one-third of cardiovascular deaths occur before age 65 among Native populations, a significantly higher proportion compared to other groups. Disparities in Heart Attack and Heart Failure Risk

Emerging research highlights worrying trends in heart attack and heart failure for Indigenous adults:

A study presented by the American Heart Association found that American Indian and Alaska Native adults had a higher rate of premature heart attack deaths, with about 23% of heart attack deaths classified as premature, compared to roughly 15% among other racial groups.

In communities studied by the Strong Heart Study, rates of heart failure among American Indian adults have been estimated at two to

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## Healthy Heart Month: Heart Health in Native American Communities

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three times higher than those observed in Black, Hispanic, or white populations, especially when factors like Type 2 diabetes and kidney damage are present.

### Underlying Risk Factors

Several modifiable risk factors contribute to elevated cardiovascular risk in Native American populations. These include:

**Obesity** – Native Americans experience higher obesity prevalence linked to diet and lifestyle challenges.

**Type 2 Diabetes** – Approximately 1 in 4 Native adults has Type 2 diabetes, which significantly increases heart disease risk.

**Smoking and Tobacco Use** – Rates of current cigarette smoking among Indigenous adults remain high, compounding heart disease risk.

**High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol** – These conditions are common contributors to heart disease and require ongoing management.

These risk factors do not exist in isolation. They are shaped by broader social determinants of health, including access to nutritious foods, physical activity opportunities, stable housing, economic inequality, and historical trauma, all contributing to health disparities in Native communities.

### Community Health and Prevention

The good news is that heart disease is

preventable. During Healthy Heart Month, Osage Nation Health System encourages community members to:

**Know Your Numbers:** Regularly check blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels.

**Choose Heart-Healthy Foods:** Increase access to fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and traditional foods.

**Stay Active:** Aim for regular physical activity that fits your lifestyle and traditions.

**Quit Tobacco Use:** Seek support programs to reduce or stop smoking and tobacco use.

**Manage Stress:** Practices that support emotional, spiritual, and cultural well-being are protective for heart health.

### Looking Ahead

Addressing cardiovascular disparities requires culturally responsive care, community-led health initiatives, and continued support for preventive health education. During Healthy Heart Month and beyond, Osage Nation Health System remains committed to heart health, honoring tradition while promoting wellness and longevity for all tribal members.



## 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!

## Cancer Prevention Month: A Focus on Native American Health

February is National Cancer Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness about the importance of reducing cancer risk through education, early detection, and healthy living. Cancer affects many families in Indian Country, and understanding local and national trends can help guide prevention efforts in our community.

### Cancer and Native American Communities

Cancer remains a significant health concern for American Indian and Alaska Native populations. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cancer is the second leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native adults, closely following heart disease. This highlights the importance of prevention and early detection at every age.

### Disparities in Cancer Outcomes

Native American communities experience notable disparities in cancer incidence and survival:

- **Later Stage at Diagnosis:** American Indian and Alaska Native adults are more likely to be diagnosed with cancer at later stages compared to non-Hispanic white adults, which can limit treatment options and lower survival rates.
- **Higher Mortality for Certain Cancers:** Some cancer types, such as lung, liver, stomach, and kidney cancers, have higher mortality rates among Indigenous adults compared with other racial groups in the U.S.

### Risk Factors That Can Be Addressed

While not all cancer causes are preventable, many risk factors can be reduced through healthy lifestyle choices and community efforts:

#### Tobacco Use:

Tobacco use is a well-established risk factor for many cancers, including lung, throat, and mouth cancers. Rates of cigarette smoking and commercial tobacco use remain elevated in some Native communities — and while traditional ceremonial tobacco holds cultural meaning and should be respected, commercial tobacco poses serious health risks.

#### Diet and Physical Activity:

A diet high in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and foods low in processed sugars — combined with regular physical activity — is linked to lower risk for several cancer types. Conversely, obesity and physical inactivity are associated with increased risk for cancers such as breast, colorectal, and pancreatic cancer.

#### Alcohol Consumption:

Heavy alcohol use increases the risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, and breast. Reducing alcohol intake can meaningfully lower cancer risk.

#### Screening Saves Lives

Early detection can dramatically increase the chances of successful cancer treatment:

**Breast Cancer:** Regular mammograms can detect breast cancer before symptoms develop.

**Colorectal Cancer:** Screenings such as colonoscopies can find precancerous polyps and early-stage cancers.



FEBRUARY IS

**NATIONAL  
CANCER**  
PREVENTION MONTH

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## Cancer Prevention Month: A Focus on Native American Health

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Cervical Cancer: Pap tests and HPV testing help detect precancerous changes.

According to the American Cancer Society, screening and early detection have contributed to a steady decline in cancer mortality nationwide over recent decades.

Practical Steps for Prevention

Here are ways you can support cancer prevention in your life and community:

- ✓ Quit commercial tobacco use and seek culturally appropriate cessation programs.
- ✓ Eat a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and traditional foods.
- ✓ Stay physically active – even moderate daily movement matters.
- ✓ Participate in recommended cancer screenings based on age and risk.
- ✓ Talk with your healthcare provider about personalized prevention plans.

We're Here to Support You

At Osage Nation Health System, we are committed to cancer prevention, education, and support for our enrollees and elders. This Cancer Prevention Month, we encourage you to take steps – big and small – that protect your health and strengthen our community.

Together, we can reduce cancer risk, improve outcomes, and honor the he

Osage Nation Health System Senior Services and Elder Nutrition brings you

# BINGO GAMES

PRIZES | FUN FOR Elders 55+

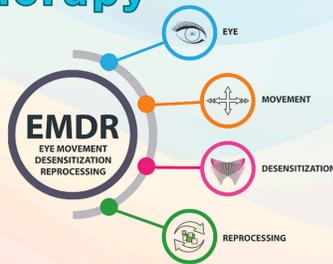
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24<sup>TH</sup> AT 1:30 PM  
FAIRFAX ELDER NUTRITION

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26<sup>TH</sup> AT 1:30 PM  
PAWHUSKA ELDER NUTRITION SITE

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## Understanding EMDR Therapy

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a structured, evidence-based therapy designed to help individuals heal from trauma and distressing life experiences.



During EMDR sessions, clients briefly focus on a traumatic memory while simultaneously engaging in bilateral stimulation (such as guided eye movements). This process helps reduce the emotional intensity and vividness of the memory, allowing the brain to reprocess the experience in a healthier way.

Extensive research supports EMDR as an effective treatment for:

- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Anxiety and depression
- Grief and loss
- Addictions and compulsions
- Chronic pain
- Other unresolved or distressing events

At our center, we honor the strength it takes to seek healing. EMDR therapy offers a path toward restoring balance – mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. If you or someone you know is struggling, we're here to walk alongside you on the journey toward healing.



473 Elks Lodge Road, Pawhuska, OK. 74056  
539.212.2499



## OSAGE NATION COUNSELING CENTER / PRIMARY RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT (PRT) CENTER

"Substance Abuse Recovery Starts Here!"

- 90-Day Residential Program for Native Americans (with CDIB)
- A Safe Place to Heal, Grow, and Reclaim Your Life
- Residential & Outpatient Recovery Services under one caring system
- Culturally Grounded Healing honoring identity, tradition, and resilience
- Support for Individuals, Families, Children & Teens
- Trauma-Informed, Evidence-Based Therapies to support recovery
- Transitional Living & Re-Entry Support beyond treatment
- Here for You — Every Step of Recovery

### WE SEE YOU!

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 for both women's and men's residential programs.

### CONTACT US!

Osage Nation Counseling Center

473 Elks Lodge Road, Pawhuska, OK. 74056

539.212.2499

Osagehealth.org



## Educating Our Community Through School-Based Prevention Partnerships

By ONHS Prevention Department



Osage Nation Health System Prevention Department Hosted Professional Development training in January.

In January 2026, the Osage Nation Health System Prevention Department hosted a professional development training for Pawhuska Public School staff and faculty, strengthening their ability to support student mental health and overall well-being.

The training featured Dr. Darryl Tonemah, Ph.D., a nationally recognized Native American psychologist and trauma specialist, whose culturally grounded approach to healing and resilience resonated deeply with participants. Attendees included teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff, and school personnel who play a critical role in identifying and responding to student needs.

Key training components included:

- Recognizing signs of trauma, emotional distress, and substance misuse
- Implementing trauma-informed strategies within classrooms and school settings
- Increasing awareness of suicide prevention resources, including 988
- Improving referral pathways and coordination with behavioral health providers

Feedback from attendees reflected strong

engagement and practical impact:

"Great Job! Good tools to have, and I could have listened to more! Thank You!"

"So much I can use in my classroom. Thank You"

"I learned a lot. He was a great speaker. I will definitely use these tools."

This school-based partnership is an example of how Osage Nation Health System continues to build stronger systems of support for our youth and families. The Prevention Department is committed to reaching all local school districts within the Osage Nation service area, with similar partnership efforts ongoing and planned to ensure consistent access to prevention education, professional development, and coordinated referral pathways across the community.

For more information about prevention programs and behavioral health resources, visit our website at <https://osagehealth.org/>.

You may also contact the Osage Nation Health System Prevention Department at:

Osage Nation Health System Prevention Department  
Osage Nation Civic Center  
1449 W Main  
Pawhuska, OK 74056  
539-212-2521

## National Children's Dental Health Month

By Miranda Scholz, DDS, ONHS Dental Dept. Director

February is National Children's Dental Health Month, which was established to highlight the importance of pediatric dental care. At the WahZhaZhe Dental Clinic, we work every day to keep our kids' smiles healthy, and we wanted to take this opportunity to explain how you, as parents, can help.

Many people assume that baby teeth are not important because they will eventually be lost. This could not be further from the truth. Baby teeth are, of course, important for speaking, chewing, and smiling, but they also play an important role in saving space for adult teeth. When baby teeth are extracted due to extensive tooth decay, the surrounding teeth can shift to fill the space, preventing the adult teeth from erupting properly. Cavity-causing bacteria can also spread from baby teeth to adult teeth.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease, affecting up to 40% of children by kindergarten. Even young children under 1 are at risk of tooth decay from bottle use. When babies are put to sleep with a bottle, their teeth are exposed to the sugars in the milk for a prolonged period, which can lead to tooth decay. Cavities can, of course, be painful, progress into dental infections, increase the amount of time spent away from school and other activities, and, if the front teeth are involved, can affect the child's

self-esteem. So, what can be done to prevent tooth decay in children?

- Practice good oral hygiene. Brush your child's teeth twice per day for two minutes with a soft-bristle toothbrush, morning and night. For babies who do not yet have teeth, gently wipe their gums with a soft, damp washcloth after each feeding to remove harmful bacteria. If your child's teeth are touching, floss them once per day.

- Limit cavity-causing foods. Sugary foods and drinks, including fruit juices and fruit gummy snacks, put your child at high risk for tooth decay. Instead, opt for whole fruit, vegetables, or calcium-rich dairy snacks, such as cheese. Drink plenty of water, which can help rinse away sugars and food debris. Never put your baby to bed with a bottle of milk.

- Schedule a dental visit. Children should first see the dentist for a checkup before their first birthday or within six months of getting their first tooth. This helps establish a relationship with your dentist and hygienist, reinforces good habits, and, hopefully, prevents childhood dental anxiety. We are always accepting new patients, including pediatric patients, at the Wahzhazhe Dental Department. Call 918-287-9300 to schedule your appointment.



February is  
*National*  
**CHILDREN'S  
DENTAL  
HEALTH MONTH**

**HEALTHY SMILES START EARLY.**

**CALL TODAY TO SCHEDULE YOUR CHILD'S DENTAL  
CHECK-UP AT ONHS DENTAL – 918.287.9300.**

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# Diabetes Department February Cooking Class

By Leah Loyd, RD/LD, Dietician, ONHS Diabetes Department



The Diabetes Program at the Wahzhazhe Health Center kicked off its first cooking class of the year on February 5, 2026. The recipe was a hearty and nutritious “Bison Pot Pie,” featuring bison sourced locally from Butcher House Meats in Hominy. All attendees enjoyed a taste test of the flavorful dish and left with a complimentary meat smasher and cookbook to support healthy cooking at home.

The Diabetes Program invites community members to join future free cooking classes. The next class will be held on Thursday, April 2, 2026, at 10:30 a.m., where participants will learn to prepare a refreshing “Lemon Cranberry Quinoa Salad” just in time for Easter. Classes take place on the second floor of the Wahzhazhe Health Center, and all are welcome to attend.



## NUTRITION COOKING CLASS

**Thursday, April 2nd at 10:30 AM**

At the Wahzhazhe Health Center, 2nd floor cooking demonstration kitchen



Participants will receive door prizes, and healthy samples will be provided.

☎ 539.212.2373      📍 316 E. Main Street, Pawhuska



## TITLE VI / ELDER NUTRITION Weekly Activities

**ELDERS 50+ ARE WELCOME!**



**Title VI / Elder Nutrition Class - PAWHUSKA**  
350 Senior Circle Drive, Pawhuska, OK.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		Chair Exercise 10:45-11 AM	Ballet Chair Exercise 10:45-11 AM	Chair Exercise 10:45-11 AM		

**Title VI / Elder Nutrition Class - FAIRFAX**  
401 South 8th, Fairfax, OK.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	Exercise Class 10-11 AM		Exercise Class 10-11 AM		Exercise Class 10-11 AM	

# Assisted Living Facility Construction Progress Update

By OHNS Facilities



Construction on the Osage Nation Health System Assisted Living Facility in Hominy continues to move forward with strong momentum, and I'm pleased to share an update on our progress.

We are reaching several significant milestones across the project. The roof system is now fully in place, providing a major step toward enclosing the structure. Exterior sheathing and air barrier installation are nearly complete, and masonry veneer work is actively progressing. Inside the building, interior metal stud framing is nearing completion, and our mechanical, electrical, and plumbing teams are working diligently on system top-outs.

Site development is advancing as well. Storm infrastructure has been installed, street curbs are taking shape, and light pole bases have been set. Each week, the facility's footprint becomes more defined, and you can truly begin to see this vision come to life.

This project represents far more than bricks and mortar. It reflects our commitment to providing quality assisted living services right here at home for our Osage elders. Ensuring our elders have access to care, comfort, and dignity—while remaining close to family, culture, and community—is a responsibility we take seriously.

We are incredibly proud of the progress being made and grateful for the continued support from our community. As construction advances, we will continue to provide updates and share milestones along the way.

This facility is a testament to what we can accomplish together, and we look forward to the day we open our doors to serve our elders in this beautiful new space.

## New Video

### Exciting Hominy Assisted Living Facility Update Here!



[www.osagehealth.org](http://www.osagehealth.org)



# For Your Information:



## Chair Ballet Classes

Join us for our new Chair Ballet classes every Wednesday 10:30-11:30am

Classes are free for elders and will be held at ONHS Elder Nutrition / Title VI 350 Senior Circle Drive




# SAVE THE DATE

## NATIVE ALLIANCE AGAINST VIOLENCE

### Saturday, April 11, 2026

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

# FASHION Show



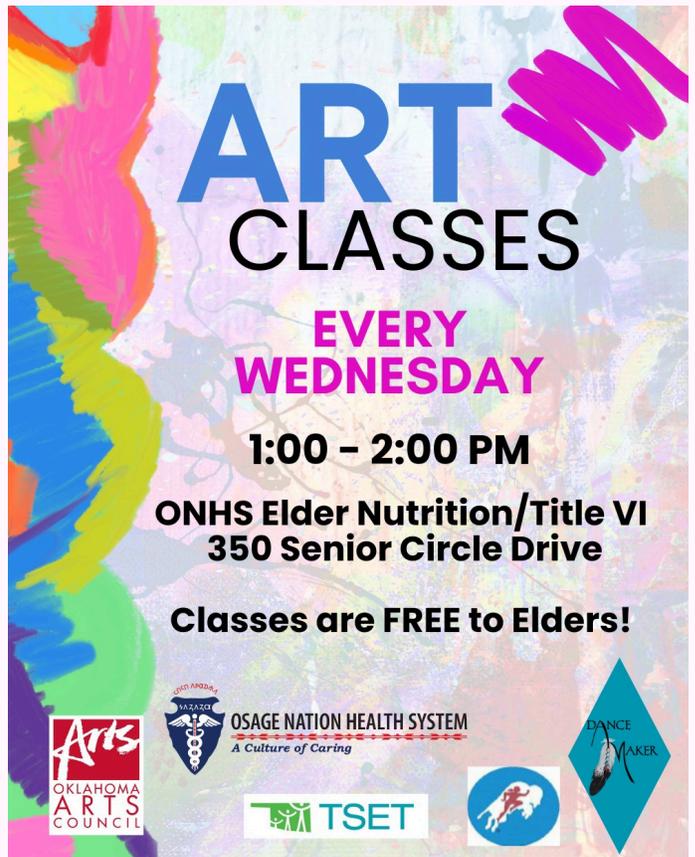

We invite programs to participate by showcasing 1-2 outfits. Submissions may include ribbon skirts or shirts, everyday fashion, regalia, shawls, and accessories, representing styles for children through adults. We ask that designs incorporate teal to reflect and honor the color of the awareness month. We are also seeking models to walk the runway on the day of the event. For more information or to get involved, please contact us at [info@oknaav.org](mailto:info@oknaav.org)



**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 - Pharmacy  
316 E. Main Street, Pawhuska, OK. 74056 918.287.9300



# ART CLASSES

## EVERY WEDNESDAY

### 1:00 - 2:00 PM

ONHS Elder Nutrition/Title VI  
350 Senior Circle Drive

Classes are FREE to Elders!



# APPLY NOW





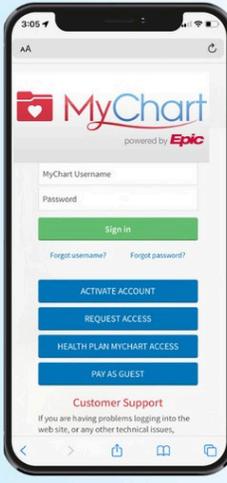


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ACCREDITATION ASSOCIATION  
for AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE, INC.



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 on the  
**App Store**



GET IT ON  
**Google Play**






**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!



INSURANCE CARD



MEDICARE HEALTH INSURANCE



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Questions? Call Patient Registration 918.287.9300

## Sign up for **TEXT ALERTS**

via **Hello World**



-  **APPOINTMENT REMINDERS**
-  **CONFIRM APPOINTMENTS**
-  **CANCEL APPOINTMENTS**

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



**Hello World** gives you more control on your healthcare journey, with notifications of appointments sent right to your mobile text message.



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## Observances for February and March

### February:

- Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) / Low Vision Awareness Month
- American Heart Month
- Gallbladder Cancer & Bile Duct Cancer Awareness Month
- International Prenatal Infection Prevention Month
- National Cancer Prevention Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month



### March:

#### Monthly Observances

- Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month
- Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month
- Myeloma Action Month
- National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month
- National Edometriosis Awareness Month
- National Kidney Month
- National Nutrition Month
- National Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month
- Save Your Vision Month
- Trisomy Awareness Month
- Workplace Eye Wellness Month
- National Athletic Training Month

#### Awareness Weeks

- National Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week-- March 9-15
- Patient Safety Awareness Week-- March 9-15
- National Sleep Awareness Week-- March 9-15
- National Poison Prevention Week-- March 16-22
- Brain Awareness Week-- March 10-16
- National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week-- March 18-24

#### Days to Note

- World Birth Defects Day — March 3
- National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day — March 10
- World Kidney Day — March 13
- World Sleep Day — March 14
- National Native American HIV/AIDS Awareness Day — March 3
- National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day — March 20
- World Oral Health Day — March 20
- World Downsyndrome Day — March 21
- World Tuberculosis Day — March 3
- American Diabetes Alert Day — March 25
- Epilepsy Awareness - Purple Day — March 26
- National Doctors' Day — March 30

#### Days to Note:

- February 2: Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Day
- February 4: World Cancer Day
- February 6:
  - Give Kids A Smile® Day
  - National Wear Red Day
- February 7: National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day
- February 9:
  - International Epilepsy Day
  - National Toothache Day
- February 14: National Donor Day
- February 18: Critical Care Transport Nurses Day
- February 20: National Caregivers Day
- February 22:
  - National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day
  - World Encephalitis Day
- February 28: Rare Disease Day

#### Awareness Weeks:

- February 2–6: Ambulatory Care Nurses Week
- February 2–8: PeriAnesthesia Nurse Awareness Week
- February 7–14: Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week
- February 7–15: Cardiovascular Professionals Appreciation Week
- February 8–14:
  - Cardiac Rehabilitation Week
  - Heart Failure Awareness Week
  - Sepsis Survivor Week
- February 14–21: National Condom Week
- February 16–20: National Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant Week
- February 23 – March 1: National Eating Disorder Awareness Week

## 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**