

Hello Everyone,

I trust each of you is having a happy and healthy new year.

Healthcare and healthcare reform continues to be major topics in the press. Throughout the United States hospitals have voiced their concerns over decreased reimbursement and increased cost of doing business. Even though the Chickasaw Nation is blessed with a strong infrastructure and exceptional professional leadership, the healthcare system is not exempt from these cut backs. Providing quality healthcare to the citizens of the Nation is a priority and physician recruitment plays a major role in doing that.

Carl Albert Indian Health Center has added to its staff a full time psychiatrist with over 3 years practice experience. Todd Pogue, D.O. is originally from the Ada area and started seeing patients on January 11, 2010. Dr. Erica Sun will remain on staff on a part time basis providing additional support in Ada and telepsychiatry to the satellite clinics.

Beginning January 18, 2010 the Ardmore Clinic adds to its staff physician assistant Marc Kagan. Marc has been working in the state of New Mexico and brings 10 years of experience to the Ardmore area where he has family ties.

Jesse Howell, DDS has accepted a part time position providing dental services to the Chickasaw citizens in the Saturday dental clinic. Dr. Howell is a member of the Choctaw Nation and currently works full time with the Cherokee Nation. He will start January 30, 2010.

Patient visits for the month of December 2009 were down slightly from the same time last year. Harsh weather, provider sick leave and the holidays helped to contribute to the lower numbers. Internal Medicine visits were 378, Emergency Department visits were 833, Pediatric visits were 788, Same Day Clinic visits were 2435 and family practice visits including the satellite clinics were 3066. OB/GYN visits were 57, general surgery visits were 422 and actual surgeries were 265.

Construction on the Chickasaw Nation Medical Center is still on going with the new facility opening some time this summer.

Thanks to each of you and I look forward to serving you in the New Year.

Connie Barker
Tribal Legislator, Pickens District