

Hello Everyone,

It is an honor for me to have been selected as the Committee Chair of the Health Care Committee for FY2010. Providing quality health care is a major part of my life and I am passionate about it. I pledge to my colleagues and the Chickasaw people to do my best in making decisions about health care and in providing information about the Division of Health through this column every month.

The holidays are upon us and we as Chickasaws have much to be thankful for! The annual Elders Thanksgiving lunch and bazaar was held recently, which created a forum to enjoy fellowship and great food. It is always special to see our elders engage in so many activities and impart their knowledge to us through their many areas of expertise and knowledge.

Construction on the new hospital is still on schedule and administrator Dr. Judy Goforth Parker and her staff are doing an excellent job of planning for the new opening. Preparations are already underway to make the transition from the old facility to the new one as seamless as possible. "Patient safety and comfort is always a priority during a major move like this one, and every department in the hospital is engaged in the planning" said Lisa Bumpas of the Carl Albert Hospital administrative office. Dr. Parker and her team are busy dealing not only with the daily task of our healthcare system, but with other critical events like seasonal influenza management, H1N1 (Swine Influenza) preparation and management and following all of the healthcare reform initiatives that could have an impact on our Nation.

Preston Hucks, M.D. will be joining the Internal Medicine department at Carl Albert. Dr. Hucks has practiced medicine for over 10 years and will start seeing patients on November 30th. Another addition to the medical staff is Trudi Freeland, ARNP. Trudi is a board certified Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner and has practiced medicine for 10 years. She will begin seeing patients in the Same Day Clinic November 13th.

During October, 2009, there were 390 internal medicine patient visits, 1427 emergency room patient visits, 830 pediatric visits, 2696 same day clinic visits, 3700 family practice visits inclusive of satellite clinics, and 48 deliveries. There were 456 general surgery visits and 298 actual surgery cases performed. It is impressive to see the total number of encounters occurring through our healthcare system and how blessed we are to have these valuable services available.

I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and remember our men and women in uniform because not all will be able to travel home to share Thanksgiving and Christmas with their families.

Thank you,
Connie Barker, Pickens District Seat 2