

March 2004

Enhancements in health care, providers coming on line

Greetings from Legislator Mary Jo Green, Seat 5, Pontotoc District and Chairman of the Health Care Committee! The committee met on Feb. 9 and received an informative report from Bill Lance, the Health System Administrator. Mr. Lance answered many questions from the legislators regarding health care services in the Chickasaw Nation.

The new Diabetes Clinic in Ada is almost ready for occupancy. The clinic will open for business soon and grand opening ceremonies are scheduled for late March. Diabetes is rampant among Indian people and we need the clinic desperately. Construction on the Purcell clinic is progressing on schedule. The facility should be completed by September and all personnel staffed and open for business by October 1, the beginning of Fiscal Year 2005.

All vacancies in dental clinics at Carl Albert Hospital and the outlying clinics are filled. If you have a dental emergency, the Tishomingo Clinic may be able to address emergency dental needs before the Ada Clinic.

Good news for the Women's Clinic! Dr. Richard McClain, Ob Gyn specialist, has accepted a position at Carl Albert Hospital. Dr. McClain will be full time at the clinic and Drs. Whiting and Jenkins will share duties to fulfill another full time position. Therefore, two doctors will be on duty at all times.

Construction of the Healthy Lifestyles facility in Ada is progressing slower than expected and it is now projected to open in May or June. The healthy systems business office expansion is progressing well and two vacancies on the Governing Board will be filled very soon. Excellent feedback has been received regarding Dr. Whitley and the Ardmore eye clinic.

Important information regarding referrals! Patients must be pre-approved for any service provided by an outside service provider if the health system is to pay for the service. Also, a patient with a need for any service that is provided by our health system will not be referred to an outside provider.

The committee is continuing its needs assessment regarding independent living, assisted living and nursing home care for elders and the disabled. I will report the results when the assessment is completed.

As always, I invite any comments or questions you may have. Please contact me through the address and telephone number listed elsewhere in this and every issue of *the Chickasaw Times*. I look forward to speaking with you!

May God bless our health care providers and also our Indian people that they may be in better health in the coming year. Thank you.