

Greetings and Happy New Year from Legislator Mary Jo Green, Seat 5, Pontotoc District and Chairman of the Health Care Committee! After struggling thorough the flu/pneumonia this winter, I am so happy to be feeling better and that winter is gone and spring is here! The beauty of early spring makes me happy and thankful that God has blessed us with the privilege of health, work, and all the joys of family and friends.

The Chickasaw Nation is well and flourishing with new programs and services. It is a struggle to obtain and keep good physicians and we are so happy to report that we have Dr. Marcia Matthews coming to our Tishomingo Clinic on April 1. We are also happy that the MAPS program is available for our elder Chickasaws who need drugs not on our Health System formulary. We have the best HIS hospital and clinics in the Nation, and we continue to strive to make them better. Our healthy lifestyle wellness center is so good for our people needing exercise and the water aerobics classes are wonderful. I will be so glad to get back to it after my bout with the flu. We have some good information regarding the numbers served last month from Bill Lance, Administrator of the Chickasaw Health System.

In the month of February, 2005, there were 221 hospitalizations at Carl Albert Indian Health Facility. The number of outpatient visits at Carl Albert was 13,845. February Emergency Room visits were 1,166 and the number of surgeries was 251. The Same-day Clinic saw 3,423 patients.

The Family Practice Clinic in Ada saw 1,753 patients in February. The Ardmore Clinic saw 2,806 patients and the Tishomingo Clinic saw 2,194. The Durant Clinic saw 2,538 patients in February and the Purcell Clinic saw 908.

Mr. Lance also reported that even though we have approximately 30,000 Native Americans living in our service area, the Health system has about 200,000 active medical charts. Using Indian Health Service guidelines to establish a master plan, our Health System will need to triple in size to meet projected health care needs in the year 2010. The current staffing of 558 employees will need to be increased to approximately 880 in that time frame. I'm thankful that we are already planning for 2010 because we will need all that time for such a dramatic increase in size and services!

Debra Vaughn PhD is a Chickasaw who works at the University of Oklahoma in the office of Health Promotion Programs. Dr. Vaughn and Dr. Craig Hofford made a presentation to the Legislature at our

Committee of the Whole meeting about the work of her office. Her office makes many presentations across the United States and assists Indian communities in implementing health promotion programs. We are so very proud to have a successful Chickasaw to be doing such needed work in our communities. We hope that the Chickasaw Nation can partner with her office in the future to supplement our health awareness and healthy lifestyle programs.

Please contact me through email address [mary.green@chickasaw.net](mailto:mary.green@chickasaw.net) or through the address and telephone number listed elsewhere in this and every issue of the Chickasaw Times and on the Chickasaw Nation web site. My articles are also located on the web site. I look forward to speaking with you! Until next month, thank you.