

# CareConnection

SPOTLIGHT ON

# Native American Heritage Month

November was Native American Heritage Month, a time to honor the rich cultures, traditions, and histories of Native American people. For Hunter Health, the month held a special significance, as our own history is deeply intertwined with the Native American community. Founded in 1976, we began as a clinic focused on caring for Wichita’s Native American community. Not only do we continue to honor our history of helping those that need it, but we also provide all-encompassing care for all our Wichita communities.

In 1985, we became Hunter Health Clinic in honor of **Jay** and **Vera Hunter**, respected Native American elders and teachers. They were committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our community. And we’re committed to honoring their legacy by providing each person with the whole person care that they deserve.

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# SPOTLIGHT ON Native American Heritage Month

Continued.



## How we served the American Indian/Alaska Native community in FY24:

- Provided care to 1,962 Native American patients.
- Gave HIV testing and counseling to 390 American Indian/Alaska Native patients.
- Brought critical services to the Native American community with several outreach events throughout the year.
- More than doubled our Indian Health Services (IHS) goals for the number of lab, x-ray, and optometry encounters for Native American patients.
- Had over 240 new Native American patients.



Thank you to the Native American community for trusting us with care for the mind, body, and spirit.

## CHECK OUT NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH VIDEO

Scan this QR code to watch this outstanding video by our Multimedia Storyteller Brennan Barger:



# WINTER SOLSTICE

**Battling seasonal depression? Here's some good news. The Winter Solstice was on Saturday, December 21, marking the turning point when daylight begins to increase once again. This shift means brighter days are ahead! Our Manager of Integrated Care, Tatiana Munoz Vargas, shares some tips for managing seasonal depression and explains what the return of longer days means for your wellbeing.**

### 1. What Causes Seasonal Depression?

Seasonal Depression is also called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). The causes are not fully understood, but research points toward it being linked to reduced daylight. The decrease in light affects how much serotonin and melatonin our body produces. This imbalance can lead to fatigue, changes in sleep patterns, and a dip in overall mood.

### 2. What are Some Tips for Combating Seasonal Affective Disorder?

There are different ways to help manage the effects of SAD. Exposure to sunlight is important, so try spending time outside or by a window. Light therapy lamps can also be a helpful tool, if they fit within your lifestyle. This exposure to light can help boost Vitamin D production and helps regulate our sleep-wake cycle. Light therapy can also be combined with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or Vitamin D supplements; always consult your healthcare provider before starting any new treatments.

### 3. What Do the Longer Days After the Winter Solstice Mean for Those with Seasonal Depression?

The increasing daylight that follows the Winter Solstice can bring positive change. The extra daylight can improve our mood, support a healthier sleep-wake cycle, and boost our overall wellbeing.

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## DONATE TODAY

**JOIN US** in providing quality care to those who need it the most.  
**Care That Creates a Healthier Community**

Our passion—and our purpose—is about caring for the community. When people have access to the healthcare they need, they can truly thrive. And when they thrive, our entire community follows.

- We provide high-quality healthcare to all patients, insured and uninsured.
- We work with patients to provide individualized care and support that works for them.
- With your support, we can reach more patients and empower them to take control of their wellbeing.

**Your donation isn't just a one-time solution. It allows us to provide care, build facilities, and support programs that impact our community now and well into the future.**



**Follow us.** Did you know we are also on TikTok and Instagram? These pages are a great way for us to connect with our community and share more about the work we do at Hunter Health.

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT



## MEET HUNTER HEALTH'S Optometrist, Dr. Alan Wiggins, OD:

### Who I Am:

"I was born in Wichita, then moved to various military bases with my family. We returned to Wichita when my father retired from the Air Force. I chose to work in Optometry as it's one of the few medical professions where you can often vastly improve a patient's quality of life in a single visit."

### Why did you choose Hunter Health?

"A large percentage of the population struggles to get even basic health care services. I want to be part of the solution."



December was **Give the Gift of Sight month**. Dr. Wiggins talks about the importance of eye health in this video. Just scan the QR code.



## OUT *and* ABOUT

November was action-packed for Hunter Health!

### We recently attended these events:

The Wichita Kansas Inter-Tribal Warrior Society held its annual **Veteran's Powwow**, bringing together Native American veterans and community members for a celebration of honor, resilience, and heritage. The event was filled with vibrant traditional dances, soulful drumming, and moving songs that paid tribute to the courage and sacrifice of Native veterans. We were there offering blood sugar and blood pressure checks.

Our shelter nurse recently brought **flu shots to The Lord's Diner**, helping keep our community healthy and strong. She administered 29 vaccines to dinner and lunch program attendees -- another step toward a healthier, thriving community, one vaccine at a time.



# PATIENT TESTIMONIAL: Hunter Health is ‘just wonderful’

Gary Baker and Keren Thomas are true fans of Hunter Health. The couple, who are engaged, have been patients here for the past five years and wouldn't think of going anywhere else.

At the time, Gary said,

“Keren was looking for a new doctor, and I was too. She needed her medication fairly quickly because she was about to run out. Her doctor wasn't filling it, so we called Hunter Health, got an appointment within a few days, and we got Dr. Caitlin Chiles as our doctor, which was a godsend, because she's fantastic.”

“Yes, we love Dr. Chiles,” Keren added. “She just seems to know what we need, and she takes good care of us.”



They both praised the comprehensive services Hunter Health offers, including mental health support and preventative care.

“There's so many things you can come here to do all in one place at one time,” Keren said. “That's really wonderful.”

They were a bit leery of changing care providers, at first, Keren said.

“But when we got here, everybody was just wonderful. All our anxiousness went away.”

Keren even recommended Hunter Health to a friend.

“She needed several things all at one time, and I got her to go here,” she said. “And she's real happy now that she did, and her healthcare is much better now.”

They both praise the staff, in general.

“Every time we've walked through those doors, we've always been told ‘Thank you’ and ‘hello.’ They all seem to really care why we're here, just every time. People see us and they know us by name. And that means something.”

Scan this QR code to watch their video interview:





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CareConnection  
**DECEMBER 2024**



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## INTRODUCING OUR NEW MANAGER

Meet our new Lab and Radiology Manager **Leslie Tingen** with this video:



## GET CARE CONNECTION ONLINE

Now you can read our Care Connection newsletter or download it as a handy digital flipbook! **Just scan this QR code:**



## SEE OUR NEW CALENDAR

Welcome to our new Hunter Health Community Calendar! Each month, we will update it with community events you won't want to miss, and we'll let you know when we'll be attending. **Just scan this QR code:**



Please visit our website at [hunterhealth.org](http://hunterhealth.org) and check out everything it has to offer. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and working with you to make a difference in the community.