



# CareConnection

## MARCH IS COLON CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

# Get Screened, Stay Healthy

**Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S., but it's also one of the most preventable and treatable cancers when detected early. That's why regular screenings are so important.**

Colon cancer often develops without symptoms, which means you may not know you have it until it's in a more advanced stage. Screening tests, like colonoscopies and stool-based tests, can detect precancerous polyps before they turn into cancer or catch cancer in its early stages when treatment is most effective.

If you're 45 or older, or if you have a family history of colon cancer, talk to your doctor about the right screening plan for you. Taking this step could save your life.

Our **Lab and Radiology Manager Leslie Tingen**, pictured at right, is passionate about Colon Cancer education, because her father had it – and is a survivor.



**“I think a big barrier is lots of people think it's not going to happen to them,” she said. “That's what my dad kind of thought.”**

Other barriers people may face include fear and embarrassment.

**“They don't want to discuss their bowel habits with their physician,” Leslie said. “They don't want to share that very vulnerable part of them. Some people think a screening is only necessary if you have a family history, but really, it's necessary for everyone.”**

**Dr. Caitlin Chiles, our Director of Primary Care**, tells people who are hesitant about doing a colon cancer screening.

**“A phrase I say over and over again is that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So truly, if you are able to get this screening done, if you get a colonoscopy, you can get a precancerous lesion removed early that can prevent colon cancer down the road.”**

**“My dad's a fighter, and he fought it,” Leslie said. “I'm so happy that he won his battle and that I'm able to pick up the phone and call him. Join me this month as we bring awareness to colorectal cancer screening.”**

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# STAFF SUCCESS STORIES

At our recent all-staff quarterly meeting, we asked our staff members to share one of their favorite memories of working at Hunter Health. Here is the first installment.

Walking through the parking lot I came across a confused patient needing help. When I offered to help I realized that this patient did not speak english. Fortunately, Hunter Health has staff that were able to assist them without having a language barrier. I was able to guide them to the front desk, as soon as they realized that they could speak with someone with out the language barrier their expression went from frustration and confusion to relief and comfort.

I always say that as long as I feel like I made a difference in one patient's life or care, then it's been a good day. Since coming to Hunter Health, I feel like I have had nothing but good days. Every single person at Hunter works hard everyday to put positive change into patient's care.

## MOBILE MAMMO ON THE WAY

### Beep beep! Mobile Mammo coming through!

Hunter Health has partnered with Ascension Via Christi to help with access to breast cancer screening. We will start offering this service monthly directly from the Hunter Health Central Clinic parking lot. Established patients from all Hunter Health clinics are welcome to schedule their screening mammograms at [www.hunterhealth.org](http://www.hunterhealth.org).

The first date was March 12.

Call 316-262-2415.



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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 *everyone* in 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 MEMBER SHARES DEEP TIES TO HUNTER HEALTH

By Rod Pocowatchit

Nowah! That is Pawnee for hello. I am Pawnee, Shawnee and Comanche.

As of February 26, I will have been with Hunter Health for one year, as its Social Media Content Specialist.

But my ties to Hunter Health go even farther back.

I remember going to the clinic at the Central and Grove location in a strip mall when it first opened. It was a humble beginning, but a major one – the first facility to provide health care for Native Americans in Wichita.

That location opened in 1978, after initially operating out of a room at the Mid-America All-Indian Center. It was founded and run by Dr. Vernon Dyer, a Choctaw and Prairie Band Potawatomi OB/GYN physician. He had no idea what the scope of his vision would become.

By 1980, the clinic was able to expand its services with federal funding that set it apart as the first program of its kind in Kansas. In recognition of this, and to emphasize its dedication to the Native American community, the clinic took on the name “Hunter Health” in 1985, in honor of Jay and Vera Hunter — revered Native American elders and educators.

I remember them fondly. I didn’t know Jay very well, but Vera was a dear, good friend of my grandmother, Lena Squirrel, so I remember Vera well. She was kind, gracious and regal.

Hunter Health thrived and slowly expanded to more space in the strip mall, eventually completely taking it over.

Along the way, Hunter Health named examination rooms after prominent local Native American couples to honor the Native American community. My grandparents – Lena (she was Pawnee) and Rufus (who was Shawnee) – were one of the couples.

Others that were honored included Moses (Kiowa and Apache) and Sherry Jaynesahkluah, Charles (Shawnee) and Ila Greenfeather (Cherokee), John Williams (Ponca) and Ruby McKenzie Williams (Kiowa), and John and Mae Woosypiti (both Comanche).

I remember there were framed pictures of each couple and a plaque with their names and tribal affiliations in each exam room. When Hunter Health moved to its location at 527 N. Grove, it took the photos with it, and they are now proudly displayed on a wall in the clinic near the waiting room. The individual pictures of the couples are placed around a large, beautiful portrait of Jay and Vera (the image was recently featured on Hunter Health’s holiday cards). There is no explanation for the pictures, they are simply just there.

I didn’t realize that the photos were on display there until sometime after the new location opened. But when I did see it, I remember a wash of memories came over me.

I was so very proud of my grandparents, but I also know that they would be proud of me, now working at Hunter Health. It kind of feels like I’m carrying on their legacy, in a way.

**Thanks, grandpa and grandma, for all that you did and all that you were. You taught me to believe in the good in the world – to work hard and make a difference. I try every day. To watch the video, scan this QR code:**



## DIABETES ALERT DAY

**March 26 was Diabetes Alert Day!** The American Diabetes Association observes this as a one-day “wake-up call” that focuses on the seriousness of diabetes and the importance of understanding the risk. We encourage you to find out if you or someone you love are at risk for type 2 diabetes.

**Call Hunter Health at 316-262-2415 today to make an appointment.**

### Did you know? According to the ADA:

- **38.4 million** Americans have diabetes.
- **8.7 million** Americans are unaware that they have it.
- Approximately **97.6 million** people ages 18 or older have prediabetes, a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.
- More than **8 in 10 adults** living with prediabetes don’t know they have it.

# A VISION FOR BETTER HEALTH: CENTRAL TO WELLNESS

Hunter Health is embarking on an exciting new chapter in its commitment to whole-person healthcare with the construction of the Community Wellness Center at Central and Grove. This state-of-the-art facility is designed to address not just medical needs but also the social drivers of health, ensuring that individuals and families in Wichita have access to resources that promote long-term wellness.



The Community Wellness Center is much more than a medical facility; it is a hub for education, fitness, and overall wellbeing. Recognizing that true health extends beyond traditional healthcare, Hunter Health is building a community wellness center at the corner of Central and Grove to foster a supportive environment where individuals can access services that enhance both physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

## Addressing Social Drivers of Health

Your health is influenced by more than just medical care—factors such as education, economic stability, social connections, and access to nutritious food and safe housing all play a major role in overall wellbeing. These factors, known as social drivers of health, can significantly impact a person’s ability to stay healthy and prevent chronic conditions. The Community Wellness Center aims to bridge these gaps by offering programs that address financial literacy, workforce readiness, and access to community resources. By tackling these barriers, Hunter Health is working to create a stronger, healthier community for all.

## Key Features of the Community Wellness Center

- **Health Education Center:** Programs on financial literacy, workforce readiness, and other essential life skills.
- **Demonstration Kitchen:** A space for nutrition and cooking classes to promote healthy eating habits.
- **Expanded Clinical Services:** Including physical therapy to support rehabilitation and chronic condition management.
- **Targeted Fitness Programs:** Specialized equipment and programs designed to reduce pain and promote mobility.
- **Child Education Space:** Providing a safe and engaging area for children while parents access healthcare and wellness services.
- **Outdoor Wellness Spaces:** Featuring a courtyard, community plaza, pocket parks, and a wellness loop to encourage physical activity and community connection.

## Enhancing Access and Community Engagement

One of the primary goals of the Community Wellness Center is to remove barriers to healthcare and wellness. By integrating education, fitness, and clinical services in one location, Hunter Health is creating a welcoming space that meets the diverse needs of the Wichita community. The center will offer various workshops, fitness classes, and support groups, ensuring that residents have access to tools that empower them to lead healthier lives.

## Join Us in Building a Healthier Future

Hunter Health is inviting community members, businesses, and philanthropic partners to support this transformative project. By contributing to the Community Wellness Center, donors will play a crucial role in shaping a healthier, stronger Wichita.

**For more information on how you can support this initiative, please contact Joan Moore, Major Gifts Officer, at [joan.moore@hunterhealth.org](mailto:joan.moore@hunterhealth.org) or call 316-305-1052. Together, we can make wellness accessible to all and build a brighter future for our community.**



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HEALTH**

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**MARCH 2025**



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-  TikTok@HunterHealthClinic
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## WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE?

Understanding health insurance can be overwhelming, but having coverage is essential for accessing the care you need. In this video, we break down why health insurance matters, how it helps protect your health and finances, and how we can guide you in finding the right coverage. **Just scan this QR code to watch:**



## SEE OUR ONLINE CALENDAR

Welcome to our Hunter Health Community Calendar! Each month, we will update it with community events, food distributions, health fairs and more. **Just scan this QR code:**



Please visit our website at [hunterhealth.org](https://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.