

Community Outreach

Updates from the Office of Health Policy



Greetings from the Chickasaw Nation Office of Health Policy. We are welcoming our fourth intern from the Chickasaw Nation internship program. This program provides eligible participants education and training experiences through collaborative relationships in different departments of the Chickasaw Nation. The intern will be introduced to the importance of health policy and advocacy for health-related policies impacting Chickasaw citizens.

Our interns have the opportunity to participate in meetings on a local, state and national level and observe tribal representatives across the 12 Indian Health Service (IHS) areas advocate for policies for over 500 tribal nations. These opportunities also introduce interns to a potential career path that is exciting and benefits others.

In summer 2026, we will offer our college course - Chickasaw History: Intersection of Health and Policy - for the sixth year on a virtual platform through East Central University. Watch for more information on this course and consider enrolling. Chokma'shki!

Special Diabetes Program for Indians Update

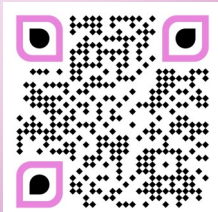
A recent bill was signed ending the partial government shutdown having significant public health extender funding. Congress increased funding for several critical tribal health programs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services impacting programs dealing with cancer care, behavioral and mental health funding, suicide prevention and substance misuse.

Some of the highlights for tribal funding include increased funding for Administration for Community Living, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and Centers for Disease Control.

We are excited to share information on another public health extender with additional funding for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). SDPI received a \$41 million increase, funding the program at \$200 million for FY 2026. This fulfills a long-standing goal to increase SDPI to \$200 million annually.

The original funding for SDPI started at \$10 million. Over the nearly three decades SDPI has been a program, there has been a 54% reduction in end-stage renal disease and 84% reduction in hospitalizations due to uncontrolled diabetes. Indian Health Service also received an increase of 1.3% over FY 2025.

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the office
of health
policy:



Healthy Lifestyle Changes

Healthy lifestyle changes can be used to treat or prevent chronic diseases. Some of the chronic diseases impacted with healthy lifestyle changes include heart disease, obesity, diabetes and other conditions. The six different categories include nutrition, physical activity, sleep, stress reduction, avoidance of risky substances and connectedness.

These six different categories can be implemented into our lifestyles as we work to improve our individual health. When making a change, check with your primary care provider. For example, if your plan is to walk more, make sure walking is not harming you. If you are making nutritional changes, make sure your choices are appropriate for any chronic diseases you may have. Making some of these lifestyle adjustments can make a positive impact on up to 80% of chronic diseases.

Examples of healthy lifestyle changes include increased activity to offset chronic conditions. Nutrition enhancements include eating minimally processed foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts and seeds. Optimal sleep of 7-9 hours nightly has a positive impact on impaired memory. Stress management can decrease depression. Connectedness is important for mental well-being and avoiding risky substances is an essential element of overall good health.

Any policy has the possibility of impacting health.

Intern Introduction— Paisley Mitchell



Hello, my name is Paisley Mitchell, I am an intern in the Chickasaw Nation Office of Health Policy. I am currently a

senior at Oklahoma State University. I will graduate in May 2026 with a bachelor's degree in public health. Once I have completed my public health degree, I will continue my education with obtaining a certification in sonography. I will be using what I have learned in the classroom and through a previous internship in public health to assist in my current internship.

Chickasaw Nation Health MyChart Launch

The Chickasaw Nation has officially launched Epic, a comprehensive electronic health record (EHR) system designed to enhance the delivery of health care services for Chickasaw citizens and the communities served. This important milestone reflects a continued commitment to strengthening health care quality, safety and access across all areas of service.

For patients, the Epic system offers expanded access to personal health information through patient-facing tools such as MyChart. These features allow individuals to view upcoming appointments, test results and visit summaries, as well as communicate more easily with their health care teams. Increased transparency and access help empower patients to take an active role in managing their health. The launch represents a major step forward in modernizing health care operations while maintaining a strong focus on culturally responsive, patient-centered care.

By investing in our health today, we help build a stronger, healthier future.

We value your feedback. Please complete this survey:

