

Healthy Spirit

INDIAN HEALTH CARE RESOURCE CENTER OF TULSA NEWSLETTER

550 S. Peoria Ave. • Tulsa, OK 74120 • 588-1900

November 2000

Hey Kids: Open Wide for Dr. Thomas

A year ago Indian Health Care Resource Center cut the grand opening ribbon on a brand new health care center. Our new clinic has a state-of-the-art dental facility that is fully equipped with modern diagnostic and treatment equipment.

Unfortunately, when we we opened our new facility, there was one thing missing – a dentist. Our previous dentist, Dr. Hamra, had moved away from Tulsa just before our new clinic opened and now we had the hard luck of trying to find a new dentist in the midst of a statewide and national shortage of dentists.

Finally, a year later, Dr. Dirk Thomas accepted a position in July as our full time dentist. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma Dental School, Dr. Thomas is excited to be here and has quickly made himself at home at our dental clinic.

Actually, there are two Dr. Thomases. Dr. Latina Thomas, the wife of our new dentist, is an optometrist with a practice in



Owasso. As good fortune would have it, she is a close friend of Indian Health Care's optometrist, Dr. Jennifer Jones. We all owe a special thanks to Dr. Jones for helping recruit our new dentist. The Thomases live in Owasso where they keep themselves busy with remodeling and home improvement projects.

Dr. Thomas is working closely with his dental patients to promote preven-

tive and corrective dental care to prevent disease and reduce tooth loss. By getting regular checkups, potential tooth and gum problems can be caught early before

problems develop. During a check-up, the dental team will clean and examine your teeth and discuss what corrective procedure may be needed and why. (See the related dental hygiene tips article on page 3).

In addition to preventive dental services, our dental clinic provides emergency dental care, treatment of dental disease and early intervention services to maintain and restore oral health function.

Make an appointment today for your children to see Dr. Thomas for a dental checkup. Be sure to sign your kids up for Oklahoma's free SoonerCare insurance if you haven't already. SoonerCare will pay for all of your child's dental expenses.

You are invited to attend the Annual Meeting and Board Election of Indian Health Care Resource Center. Date: Monday, November 27, 2000 6:30 pm at the Southern Hills Marriott Ballroom, 1902 E. 71st St., Tulsa, OK. If you would like to attend the meeting, please RSVP by calling Tonia at 382-1204.

REACH FOR FITNESS – New Youth Grant Received

Indian Health Care Resource Center is part of a state coalition that has received a federal REACH grant to conduct physical activity programs for American Indians. The REACH 2010 project is a partnership of the Oklahoma State Health Department with eight Oklahoma Tribes and the Indian Health Care Resource Center of Tulsa urban clinic. The eight participating tribes are the Absentee-Shawnee, Cherokee, Cheyenne-Arapaho, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Pawnee, Seminole, and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. Our Oklahoma Indian partnership is called the “Oklahoma Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) 2010 Native American Coalition to Address Diabetes and Cardiovascular Health.”

With the REACH grant funds, each of the Indian community partners will receive approximately \$100,000 per year for four years to conduct culturally appropriate activities for

families to increase everyday physical activity. We expect to offer many of these fitness and physical activity programs free to the participants. Many of our physical activity programs will be for elementary age children. We will be able to experiment with the types of programs we offer in order to make sure that they are popular and well-attended.

The purpose of the REACH grant is to encourage young children to stay physically active throughout their whole life. By staying active and eating nutritious meals, children will be more likely to not become overweight when they grow up to be adults.

It is well understood that an increased level of physical activity can lead to decreased obesity or maintenance of proper weight. The United States Surgeon General’s 1996 report on physical activity concluded that Americans could greatly improve their health and quality of life by exercising.

We will expect to offer some of our exercise and fitness programs after school or during school summer or intercession breaks – other activity programs might be held on evenings and weekends. We also plan to have a Native American cultural curriculum that will include traditional Indian games and skills contests as part of the physical activity program.

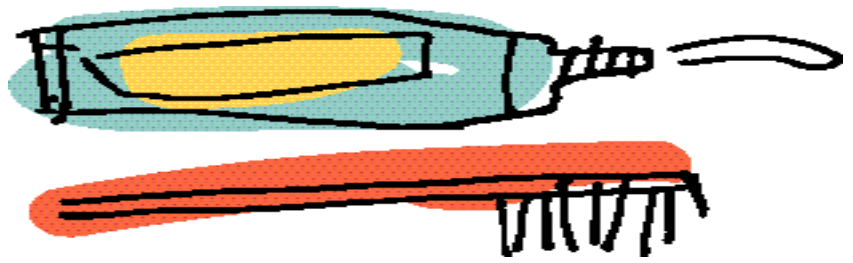
Indian Health Care expects to offer these programs in various locations in the community, including at neighborhood schools. We plan to develop physical activity programs for young elementary school age children, as well as programs for older children and the whole family.

If your family is interested in participating in the REACH program, please sign up now. If the enclosed sign-up form is missing, please call our nutritionist, Karen Rogers (918) 382-1273 to get your family placed on our REACH mailing list.

If you would like to sign your children up for the REACH physical activity program, fill out the enclosed form.



Dental Tips: Proper care for your teeth



Patients often ask the dentist, "How much time should I spend brushing my teeth?" The answer is simple: You should brush your teeth until they are clean! How much time it takes to brush your teeth is not the same for everyone. Keep in mind that one of the main reasons for brushing your teeth is to remove plaque.

Plaque is a substance which hardens on your teeth if you don't brush and floss your teeth everyday. Plaque leads to gum disease and bone loss, and bone loss is the main reason

people lose their teeth. If you have a lot of crowns, bridges, fillings or braces, it will take you longer to brush your teeth and remove plaque.

If you have trouble using your hands because of arthritis, you may need to try something else, such as a mouthwash that reduces plaque, a waterpick, an electric toothbrush, a floss-threader, etc. How long you brush your teeth should be geared to your own needs

Try using a red disclosing solution to find out if you're brushing well and

removing plaque from your teeth. Our Indian Health Care dental staff will give you a trial supply or you can buy disclosing solution or tablets at any drug store. After you brush, apply the disclosing solution to your teeth. The red stains will show where plaque is still on your teeth. Clean the teeth again and make sure you remove all the red stains. Then you will know your teeth are really clean. If you cannot remove all the stains, ask your dentist or hygienist what else you should try.

New "Indian Ways" youth program gets underway

Attention parents of grade school and middle school children. Indian Health Care has received a state Juvenile Affairs grant to conduct an "Indian Ways" youth program for Native American youth ages 5-14 and their families. The new program will offer cultural and self esteem programs to strengthen a sense of self-responsibility and good judgement.

After school enrichment programs and intercession programs at year-round schools will blend Native American cultural education and values education on a range of prevention topics. An appreciation and understanding of contemporary and traditional Indian culture will be promoted to strengthen self-esteem, values, and positive traditions. The prevention orientation the "Indian Ways" program seeks to prevent problems before they start.

The Indian children and youth will learn about the risks of substance



abuse, smoking, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, gang involvement, crime and other high risk behaviors. The Indian Ways program will provide youth and family support services, individual and family professional behavioral health counseling services and appropriate referrals to community family support agencies.

Helen Gourd, who was on our Indian Family Services staff, has been

hired to direct the Indian Ways program. Ms Gourd will conduct a life skills program that focuses on developing individual strengths of the Indian youth. The program will promote youth empowerment, role modeling and family skills development. Peer decision-making processes, conflict resolution techniques, negative peer pressure resistance and refusal skills also be discussed.

The Indian Ways program will also provide outreach services to Indian families in public schools and in their homes. Referrals can be made to IHCR's counseling services to help parents better manage their child's behavior and achieve better relations between themselves and their child. The family support services will help alleviate stress and strengthen the ability of parents to successfully nurture their children. For more information on the "Indian Ways" youth program, call Helen at 382-1241.

Free mammograms available at Indian Health Care

If you are a Native American women age 40 or older Indian Health Care Resource Center would like to set an appointment for you to receive an annual breast cancer screening mammogram. Free mammograms are available at our clinic thanks to a grant from the Susan B. Komen Foundation Race for the Cure. Native American women age 40 and older who don't have health insurance and who qualify for our clinic's sliding fee services are eligible for the free mammograms. The program also provides free instruction to Indian women to any age on how to conduct a self-breast exam.

According to the American Cancer Society, the risk of a woman developing breast cancer during her lifetime is 1 in 8. In percentage terms, about 12 % of all women will develop breast cancer. Importantly, with early detection, most of these cancers can now be effectively treated. The risks of breast cancer increase as a woman gets older – 78% of breast cancer occurs in women who are over age 50. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among women, exceeded only by lung cancer.

The goal of Indian Health Care Resource Center's breast health program is to increase the number of Native American women who receive mammograms, clinical breast exams and self-breast exam education. The breast health educational program provides women

with general information about breast cancer, how often it occurs, and risk factors. The educational program emphasizes the need for women to conduct self-breast exams on a monthly basis, in addition to receiving clinical breast exam and a mammogram screening.

Getting a mammogram is basically just a x-ray of each breast and takes only a few seconds. Mammography plays an important role in saving lives because it can find a breast cancer tumor as early as two years before it can be felt. Far too many women die of breast cancer because they don't find their breast cancer soon enough. Women are encouraged to protect themselves by practicing monthly self-breast examination, having a yearly mammogram and a clinical breast exam.



The Komen Foundation recommends the following breast screening guidelines for women:

- Monthly breast self-examination beginning by age 20.
- * Clinical breast examinations at least every 3 years beginning at age 20, and annually after 40.
- * Annual screening mammography for women beginning at age 40.
- Screening for women under age 40 with either a family history of breast cancer or other personal risk factors, as directed by physician.

To make an appointment for a free mammogram at Indian Health Care Resource Center, call 588-1900.