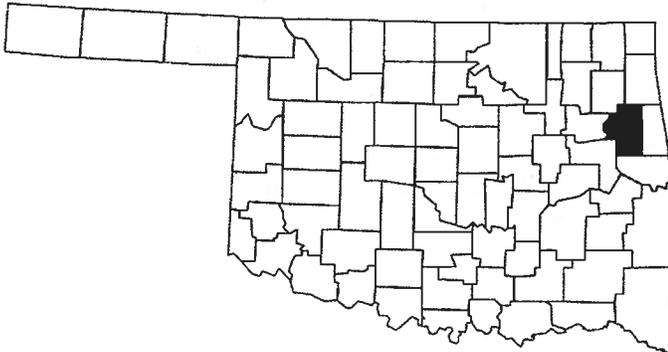


CHEROKEE COUNTY

CHEROKEE COUNTY HEALTH COALITION

Established in 1998—One of the Initial Pilot Communities



When we speak of system change at the local level, it can have a tremendous impact on the community. The Cherokee County Health Coalition has been a shining example of how diverse groups of people can make a difference and impact the wellness of the community. Selected as one of the original 41 Turning Point communities nationally, the Cherokee County Health Coalition has accomplished many health improvement goals. There are approximately 60 active partners with the coalition. As a Walk This Weigh pilot, new partner opportunities have opened. Successes to date include the establishment of a Health Care Authority to address funding issues, elimination of unhealthy drinks and snacks from vending machines on school grounds, enforcement of a “no tobacco” policy, school-sponsored outdoor sporting events, opening a community health clinic in Hulbert and their continued growth, especially in areas where residents would not otherwise receive services, and the implementation of the Great Body Shop—a school-based physical health curriculum in the Head Start program.

Activities

- Established four work groups of the Health Coalition.
 - Tobacco Prevention and Control
 - Healthy Kids for a Healthier Tomorrow
 - Safe Kids Coalition
 - Publicity
- Established Health Care Authority whose members include Northeastern State University (NSU), Tahlequah City Hospital, and Cherokee County Health Department.

Outcomes

- Created a vision: As a collaborative partnership the Council will promote innovative health related programs and seek resources for Cherokee County citizens to achieve a self-determined quality of life necessary for good health.

- Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) is active.
- Implemented cessation/education program where kids can attend class instead of being suspended from school.
- Tahlequah Public Schools are 24/7 smoke-free campuses.
- Great Body Shop curriculum in Cookson Hills and Cherokee Nation Head Start sites. 2000 children ages 3-6 have participated over the past two years of the program.
- In partnership with the Cherokee Nation, approximately 1,000 car/booster seats have been given away through several health fairs and car seat checks.
- Implemented education outreach program on the dangers of Meth labs and how to detect labs in a community.
- Monthly column with the Tahlequah Press.
- The coalition is one of the pilots for Walk This Weigh.
- Tahlequah Public Schools eliminated junk food and soda pop from the vending machines.
- Hulbert Community Health Center opened in August 2002 and received Federal 330 funds in August of 2003. They have begun construction on a new clinic and hope to open in Spring 2004.
- The clinic in partnership with the health coalition, Vanderbilt University, Robert Wood Johnson, and W.K. Kellogg Foundations are in the process of opening a birthing center targeting the indigent of Cherokee County.
- Health Services Council developed the Rural Health Foundation and NSU Center for Rural Development. Initiatives of the center include:
 - Public Forums
 - Conference for Health Care Professionals
 - Integrated Health Care Systems
 - Research and Development
 - Organize activities in five surrounding counties

Participants

- Cherokee Nation
- Northeastern State University
- Cookson Hills Head Start
- Cherokee County Health Department
- OSU Extension
- Hastings Hospital
- Tahlequah City Hospital
- Tahlequah Public Schools
- Hulbert Public Schools
- Tenkiller Public Schools
- Keys Public Schools
- State Representative
- Cookson Hills Methodist Church
- Local Business Leaders