

## BOARD of DIRECTORS

**Michael Herbert**  
Board Chair  
Delta Dental of Kansas  
Retired

**Rachel White**  
Vice Chair  
Muskogee Creek  
Evergy

**Dal Domebo**  
Secretary  
Kiowa, Ponca, Quapaw  
Wichita Public Schools

**Stuart Ray**  
Treasurer  
Davis-Moore Automotive  
Group

**Melinda Ware**  
Kiowa, Creek, Seminole  
Retired

**Todd Smalley**  
Andover State Bank

**Mike Lowry**  
Cherokee Tribe  
Allen, Gibbs, & Houlik

**Timothy Bobb**  
Delaware Tribe of  
Western Oklahoma  
Evergy

**Chantal Nez Dominguez**  
Navajo Nation  
Sedgwick County Health  
Department

**Susan Breeden**  
Osage  
Cargill

## Support Hunter Health's Mission



**Did you know that you can support Hunter Health's mission while you grocery-shop at Dillions?** When you register with Dillions Community Rewards and choose Hunter Health as your nonprofit, Dillions will donate a portion of every purchase you make to our organization.



### How to set it up:

↓  
**Create a digital account.**

↓  
Log in or create a new online account by clicking **"Register"** at the top of the page.

↓  
Once you've registered, click **"My Account,"** then **"Community Rewards."**

↓  
Then, search for Hunter Health and click **"Enroll."**

**IT'S THAT EASY!**

3

## Stay Connected

@ HOME, @ WORK, @ YOUR FINGERTIPS



**Facebook: @HunterHealthClinic**  
Like our Hunter Health page and get the latest updates on your news feed.



**LinkedIn: @hunterhealthclinic**  
Stay up to date with organization news and connect with other employees.



**YouTube: @hunterhealth**  
Watch videos about Hunter Health on an array of topics.

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 in the weeks ahead to make a difference in the community.

6

SEPTEMBER 2022



# CareConnection

SEPTEMBER 2022  
CareConnection

## New optometry provider to build upon an existing model. ▶▶▶

In the summer of 2018, we added vision services to our integrated care model in partnership with Envision Inc.

**Vision health is currently among the greatest unmet health care needs in the United States.<sup>1</sup>**

The cost of care often prevents people from receiving eye exams, which can also help detect other health problems.

Low-income and racial- and ethnic-minority populations tend to be at greater risk for undiagnosed and uncorrected eye and vision disorders and diseases than the rest of the population. These disparities are compounded by several factors, including inadequate or no health insurance, lack of access to

optometrists, treatment costs, and lack of understanding of the importance of routine eye care.<sup>2</sup>

Unmet eye and vision care needs among millions of children, working poor, and elderly people can significantly impair learning, job performance, employment opportunities, and home safety. That's why we're proud to share, this month, that our new optometrist Dr. Alan Wiggins has brought his 13 years of experience to Hunter Health.

Dr. Wiggins was born in Wichita, moving to various Air Force bases across the country until his father retired from military service. He later graduated from the University of Missouri – St. Louis College of Optometry, owning his own practice

**"We've seen the need for individuals to have better access to eye care for many years. A lot of diseases have an impact on the eye, especially diabetes and high blood pressure. You might catch early changes in the retina that are a sign of uncontrolled hypertension. Or the same thing with diabetes."** — Dr. McNeil Chief Medical Officer



for 13 years before joining Hunter Health. Dr. Wiggins chose Optometry for the opportunity to improve a patient's quality of life in a single visit.

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

Source:  
1. APHA Policy Number: 200910, "Improving Access to Vision Care in Community Health Centers." Nov. 10, 2009.  
2. Teutsch S.M., McCoy M.A., Woodbury R.B., et al. "Making Eye Health a Population Health Imperative: Vision for Tomorrow." Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2016.

## In This Issue

SEPTEMBER 2022 | VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

- 2 National Health Center Week
- 3 Thoughts About COVID-19
- 4 Looking Back

- 5 Board of Directors
- 5 Support Hunter Health
- 6 Stay Connected



# National Health Center Week



Community health centers play an increasingly important role in the U.S. healthcare system and **serve a large and diverse patient population.**

Since the nation's first community health centers opened in 1965, expansion of the federally supported health center system to over 1,400 organizations has created an affordable health care option for more than 29 million people. Health centers help increase access to crucial primary care by reducing barriers such as cost, lack of insurance, distance, and language for their patients.<sup>1</sup>

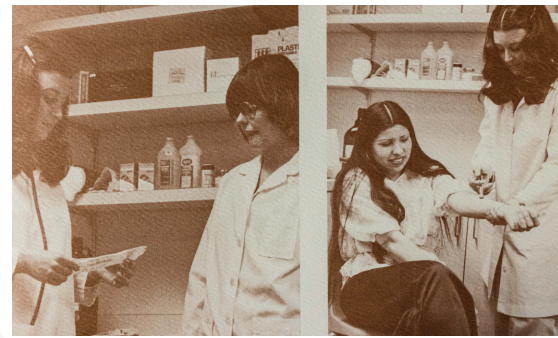
Healthcare disparities can be especially prevalent in rural and low-income communities. The Health Resources and Services Administration reports more than 7,000 primary care, 6,000 dental, and 5,500 mental health service "deserts" exist in the U.S. When a community health center takes the community's unique qualities into account and offers much-needed services, the community's overall quality of care greatly improves.

Hunter Health was founded in 1976 when Dr. Vernon Dyer, a Choctaw and Prairie Band Potawatomi OB/GYN physician, recognized an overwhelming need for culturally appropriate health care services for urban Indians. The clinic started in a back room at the Mid-America All-Indian Center, but demand for services grew so rapidly that the clinic moved to a larger location (at Central and Grove) in 1978.

**In 1985, Hunter Health became Kansas' first Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and in 1987 it became the state's first Health Care for the Homeless provider. Hunter Health remains the only Urban Indian Health Program in the state.**

At Hunter Health, we're proud to do our part in serving our community. In 2021, we helped make our quality care more affordable by providing \$6 million in discounts through our Sliding-Fee Discount Program.

Source: 1. <https://www.nachc.org/about/about-our-health-centers/what-is-a-health-center/>



This program reduces the amount uninsured and underinsured patients pay for health care services.

We're proud to be trusted with quality, affordable care in our community, and to be one of the thousands of community health centers making a difference nationwide.

## Thoughts about COVID-19 from behind a provider's mask.

By Caitlin Chiles, M.D.



**Cases of COVID-19 continue to spread in our community, with new Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 putting many at risk once again. Do you have questions about how these variants might impact you? Wondering if a booster shot is worth it? Dr. Caitlin Chiles, Director of Primary Care, has the answers.**

**I heard the vaccine doesn't work against BA.4/5. Should I still get vaccinated/boosted?**

The bivalent vaccine does offer improved protection against infection with BA.4/5. Additionally, for many it has been several months since they were last vaccinated or boosted. Boosters are an important "refresher course" for our immune systems. From the data we have so far, the vaccines are still effective in preventing serious illness and death.

**Are BA.4/5 worse than previous Omicron variants or Delta?**

BA.4/5 are worse in that they are better at evading the prevention and treatment strategies that were developed when SARS-CoV-2 was first identified. There is no solid consensus on whether it causes more severe COVID-19 disease or symptoms.

**Will COVID-19 ever go away?**

As more time goes on and more variants emerge, it seems as though COVID-19 is here to stay. Several top scientists have thought for a while now that it will become like influenza: there will be "seasons" as well as vaccines that match current strains.

**Why should we continue to wear masks?**

Masks are one of the most underused preventive measures. It took about two years, but the WHO finally acknowledged that COVID-19 is airborne. This means viral particles linger in the air even after an infected person has left a room. Ventilation and filtration of air are additional tools we can use to help reduce exposure and transmission.



Dr. Caitlin Chiles  
Director of Primary Care

Keep *you* and *your loved ones* **HEALTHY.** Stay up to date with your vaccinations today.

## Looking back with gratitude



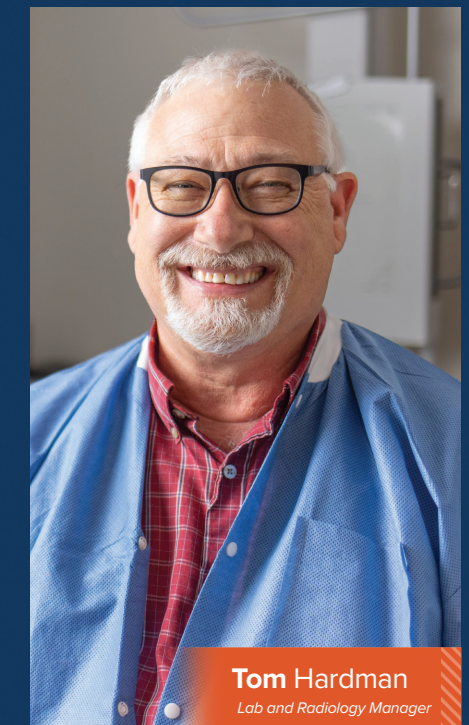
The COVID-19 pandemic continues to shine a spotlight on laboratory professionals' vital role in health care. Over the last two years, the Hunter Health lab professionals have shown extraordinary dedication in the fight against COVID-19. Inside the lab, close coordination, communication, and out-of-the-box thinking have had a huge impact.

Lab and Radiology Manager Tom Hardman joined Hunter Health in 1993, back when many of the COVID-19 test results were recorded on paper. He's overseen several upgrades and improvements during that time. With more than 3,000 tests performed this year — and thousands more dating to the early days of the pandemic — Tom says it's our partnership with Indian Health

Services that has kept Hunter Health on top of the game throughout the pandemic.

That partnership gave Hunter Health access to PCR testing on-site with rapid results before many others. That means those who test positive can learn about their status sooner and avoid putting others at risk of infection. It's moves like this, along with Hunter Health's mission of improving the health and well-being of everyone in the community, that Tom says has kept him at Hunter Health for nearly 30 years.

"I just like who we serve, why we're here, and the ability to help people. And making a difference in the community — it really feels like that's what I do here."



Tom Hardman  
Lab and Radiology Manager



**"We were at the front of the line," Tom says. "There have been times during surges in testing where it was hard to get supplies. And because of our relationships with Indian Health Services, we've been able to stay stocked."** — Tom Hardman Lab and Radiology Manager

During **National Health Center Week** from August 7–13, Hunter Health offered clinic tours to our community partners, held a patient appreciation day, and celebrated our staff with a night at Chicken N Pickle. This important week is promoted by the National Association of Community Health Centers, which seeks to celebrate significant achievements in their communities.



IN 2021

The lab department at Hunter Health performed about **78,000 tests** in 2021.

