

# Health Clinic on track for accreditation

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care surveyor Bonnie Petty gave the Tribal Health Clinic a rousing evaluation on Thursday, April 22, after she worked for two days meeting with clinic personnel, reviewing policies and procedures, and examining medical records for quality of care.

"You should be proud of everything you do," Petty said at the end of a 90-minute summary held for about a dozen clinic and Tribal personnel.

Tribal Council member Toby McClary and Tribal member and Executive Officer Chris Leno sat in on the evaluation summary.

"You're doing a great job," Petty said. "I have no areas of concern."

"The staff at the clinic should be proud of the facility and the job they're doing," McClary said.

Evaluating such areas as critical care, risk management adminis-

trative policies, quality of care and peer review, Petty noted that clinical records show "the timeliness of tests" and that personnel noted that they are "readily available to clinicians."

She said that risk management processes are in place for identifying trouble and the filing system is "very well organized."

"There's been a huge improvement in administration over the last couple of years," she said. The agency last evaluated the Tribal Health Clinic in 2005 during a mock survey.

Quality of care is "the culmination of everything else you do," she said, "and it is very good. You are responsive to patient needs."

"I always ask myself, 'Is this a location where I would want to receive care?' and without any doubt, it is. You should be very proud of the quality of care you provide. I did not see any red flags."

"You're beginning to be a culture of continual quality improvement

and that's what you want to see."

The most important improvements over the mock survey came in the areas of risk management, quality improvement and peer review, she said.

She called the Tribal facilities "beautiful, beautiful" and "culturally appropriate."

Among areas where the Health Clinic has room for improvement, Petty noted more coordination between medical and behavioral health sections because there is frequently a relationship between the two.

She suggested the clinic create documentation demonstrating that staff follows up on patients who do not show up or do not return for appointments.

"We do want to hear those things where we can raise the bar," said Tribal Health Executive Director Mark Johnston. "We're going to use them to improve. We want others to look to us for how high the bar can go."

"Great job," Johnston told the rest of the staff in the room. "Sleep well tonight."

"The future of our Tribe depends on the health of our people," McClary said, "and the information shared today proves that we're headed in the right direction."

Petty's next move is to take her evaluation back to the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care committee that ultimately grants or declines accreditation.

That response, Johnston said, is expected within the next three to four months.

"This project has been a priority for the Tribe and clinic for quite some time," Johnston said. "Although we are not formally approved today, the comments from the exit briefing are very encouraging."

"If the results are as we hope, this will be a great accomplishment for the Tribe, but more importantly an affirmation to our patients that the quality of care that they receive meets or exceeds national standards."

Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care is one of three organizations that accredits office-based surgery practices. The other two are the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities.

The clinic, an outpatient facility, selected Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care as the evaluation service because it specializes in outpatient care. ■

## Historic meal



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal Elder and Culture Committee member Carol Logan prepares a piece of dough to be fried as she makes fry bread for the second annual First Foods Celebration in the Tribal Community Center on Saturday, April 24. The event was hosted by the Culture Committee and in addition to fry bread, salmon, crab, liver, clam chowder, buffalo, elk meatloaf and crab cakes were some of the other food served.



Tribal descendant Corbin Thorsgard, 1, is fed salmon by his mother Misty Thorsgard during the second annual First Foods Celebration in the Tribal Community Center.

## In Yakima



Photo by Siobhan Taylor

A membership meeting was held Sunday, April 25, in Yakima, Wash. Attending were, front row from left, Tribal Council members Wink Soderberg, Toby McClary and Chris Mercier, who discussed Tribal concerns with Yakima-area members that included, back row from left, Shirley Deane, Sheila Wyatt and Ronald Stevens, and Gina Mansayon (front right). Tribal Council member June Sell-Shearer also attended the Yakima meeting.

## Attention Tribal members

Copies of Legislative Action Committee recommendations are available on the Tribal member side of the Tribal Web site. They are located with the Legislative Action Committee minutes.

These forms are only a recommendation used by the Legislative Action Committee to move discussion items to a regular Tribal Council meeting for a vote of the Tribal Council. If you have any questions, please contact Dakota Whitecloud, Tribal Council Relations Coordinator, for more information. You may reach Whitecloud at 503-879-1309 or 1-800-422-0232, ext. 1309. ■