

HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS

Cervical Health Awareness Month

January is recognized as Cervical Health Awareness Month, a time to highlight the importance of cervical health and encourage proactive measures to prevent cervical cancer.

Understanding cervical cancer

Cervical cancer occurs in the cells of the cervix, the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina. It is primarily caused by persistent infection with certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted infection. While most HPV infections resolve on their own, some high-risk types can lead to cervical cancer over time.

Globally, cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women, but it is highly preventable and treatable when detected early.

Key steps to maintain cervical health

- 1. Regular screening tests**
 - o The pap smear test detects abnormal cervical cells that may develop into cancer.
 - o The HPV test identifies high-risk HPV infections that could lead to cell changes. Guidelines recommend starting screening at age 21, with regular follow-ups based on age and test results.
- 2. HPV vaccination**

The HPV vaccine is a powerful tool to prevent cervical cancer. It protects against the most common cancer-causing HPV types. The vaccine is most effective when administered before exposure to HPV, ideally between the ages of 9 and 12. However, it is available up to age 45 for those who may benefit.
- 3. Practice safe sexual health**

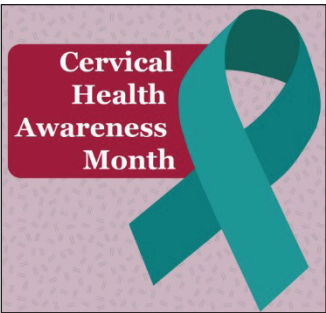
Using condoms and limiting the number of sexual partners can reduce the risk of HPV infection. Open communication about sexual health with partners is also essential.
- 4. Follow-up care**

Abnormal screening results may require additional tests or procedures. Timely follow-up ensures that any issues are addressed early, preventing the development of cervical cancer.

How you can take action

- Schedule your screening: If you're due for a pap or HPV test, make an appointment with your healthcare provider.
- Spread the word: Share information about cervical health with friends and family. Awareness can save lives.

With regular screenings, HPV vaccination, and informed choices, cervical cancer can be largely prevented, empowering women to lead healthier lives. Take action today for yourself and the women in your life — because prevention truly is the best cure. ■



Attention to Tribal members with Medicare

Previously, Shasta had a contract with Medicare to automatically roll over outstanding balances once Medicare paid. At this point in time, Forest County does not have that in place, but they are working on it. It's a contract, so it's going to take some time. Be sure to take your new cards with you to give to your providers.

If you are receiving bills from your providers after Medicare processes, you can drop them off here at the clinic (patient check-in) or you can call FCP at 715-478-4610 to provide the information or you can email them if that is an option at FCPInsurance@fcp-nsn.gov.

We know this transition has been rocky and we are right in the thick of it with you. We appreciate your patience! Hopefully we'll start seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

hayu masi,
HWC Admin

World Braille Day

Every year on Jan. 4, the world comes together to celebrate World Braille Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of Braille as a means of communication and empowerment for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. This day honors the birth of Louis Braille, the inventor of the tactile writing system that has transformed lives globally. Beyond communication and education, Braille also plays a critical role in advancing health equity and promoting well-being.

The role of Braille in health accessibility

For individuals with visual impairments, accessing health-related information can be challenging. Braille ensures that vital health resources, such as medication labels, appointment reminders and dietary guidelines are accessible.

Consider this: Properly labeled medications in Braille can prevent dangerous errors in dosing, while health pamphlets and nutritional guides in Braille empower individuals to make informed decisions about their wellness. This simple tactile system can mean the difference between independence and reliance on others for health-related tasks.

Health challenges faced by the visually impaired

Globally, more than 2.2 billion people experience some form of visual impairment. Without accessible health information, these individuals face significant barriers, including:

- Delayed diagnoses due to inaccessible medical forms.
- Increased risk of chronic conditions because of limited access to preventive care and health education.
- Mental health concerns, including isolation and stress, stemming from a lack of autonomy in managing health needs.

World Braille Day sheds light on these issues, advocating for inclusive healthcare practices.

Have burning questions about Braille?

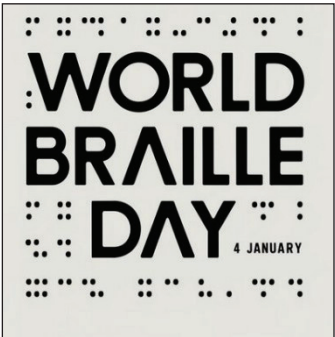
Are there different languages of Braille like there are sign language? No, Braille is considered a code where there are six dots used and considering their combination, they could represent numbers, letters and even punctuation.

Why is there Braille on the keypads at ATM machines? Depending on the cause of vision impairment, some drivers are able to use special glasses to help them drive. Having Braille on the keypad is also beneficial for people with low vision or those who forgot their reading glasses at home.

What about Braille users and touch screen phones? Most smartphone have something called the Perkins keyboard, which can be set up through the phone's accessibility settings. This type of keyboard utilizes three keys on each side of the screen with a large 'SPACE BAR' in the middle. Users are able to type using combinations of the keys to write their messages.

A call to action on World Braille Day

World Braille Day is more than a celebration — It's a reminder of the ongoing need for advocacy and innovation to support the visually impaired community. By investing in Braille resources and inclusive healthcare practices, we can create a world where health information is accessible to all, empowering individuals to live healthier, more independent lives. ■



Attention Tribal members:

This is an update on ID cards, past due bills and how to contact FCP.

Great news! We were informed that ALL cards are in the mail, so you should be seeing yours soon.

For those of our members who may be receiving past due bills, or have bills with dates of service prior to the TPA switch on July 1, 2024, contact FCPID at the information provided below:

Forest County Potawatomi Insurance Department (FCPID)

FCPID Customer Service: 715-478-4610

Fax number: 715-478-4799

Email address: fcpinsurance@fcp-nsn.gov

OR log into their portal:

<https://services.hi-techhealth.com/FP1/pages/signon.shtml>

If you haven't logged into the FCP Portal before, your username is GRC0100XXXX (if you live in the seven county service area) and GRT0100XXXX if you live outside of the service area. The XXXX will be your Tribal ID number, just like it was with Shasta.

Password is the Tribal members DOB: (mmddyyyy) no dashes or slashes. You will be asked to reset your password. It should be 11 characters: GRC(or T)0100XXXX (X = Tribal ID)

If you don't see your claims in the portal, use the email above or call FCP to talk with Customer Service.

We know frustration is high. We are in it with you and we thank everyone for their patience. Our hope is that things smooth out quickly.

hayu masi,

Your skookum Team