THE IMPORTANCE OF A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

The term “primary care provider” is frequently used when talking about our health. But, what is a primary care provider and why is it so important that you have one?

Primary care providers are doctors, nurse practitioners or physician assistants. They serve as a patient’s main medical contact—the first call you make when your throat hurts, you have a fever, or need an annual physical.

The main role of a primary care provider is to evaluate and treat health needs, recommend and coordinate any additional medical services you may need, and communicate with other physicians that are providing care to you. They can also conduct your yearly physical and help keep you on track with the recommended health screenings appropriate for your age.

When choosing your primary care provider, pick someone you are comfortable with. Patients can change primary care providers if medical needs change, or if they become dissatisfied over time. You may visit other physicians at any time, but it is recommended that you see your primary care physician whenever you can for the best continuity of your healthcare.

Having a doctor that has a good knowledge of your medical background can help keep you healthier.

Here at the Fort Thompson Indian Health Service Health Center we have five providers that are available to take care of your medical needs.

Dr. McFee grew up in Ogallala, Nebraska and graduated from High School in 1960. Dr. McFee completed his education at the University of Nebraska, School of Medicine in 1967. He has been practicing medicine for the past 50 years. Dr. McFee started his employment with Fort Thompson IHS in 2004 and is the current Clinical Medical Director on staff.
Renette Kroupa earned her Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the University of South Dakota at Vermillion in 1982 and then graduated from the Physician Assistant program at University of Iowa, Iowa City in 1984. Renette completed her Master’s degree in Physician Assistant Studies from the University of Nebraska in 1999. Renette worked at Mid-Dakota hospital and Community clinic in Chamberlain for 20 years. Renette started her employment with Fort Thompson IHS in 1997. Renette enjoys her relationships with all her patients and coworkers at this clinic.

Dr. Li earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Augusta University located in Augusta, Georgia. He then went on to obtain his combined doctoral degrees, MD and Ph.D, from the same school. In 2006, Dr. Li went to University of Miami in Miami, Florida for his residency training. Dr. Li has been with the Fort Thompson IHS since 2011.
Stephanie Feltman is a Family Nurse Practitioner who joined Fort Thompson IHS in 2015. She earned her Associate Degree in Nursing from the University of South Dakota in 1999 and then completed her Bachelor’s degree in Nursing in 2008 from South Dakota State University. Stephanie obtained her Master’s degree in Nursing from Walden University in 2015. Stephanie worked at Sanford Chamberlain in the Emergency and Obstetric Departments for the past ten years prior to starting her employment as a Nurse Practitioner with Fort Thompson IHS.

Jean Hamiel earned her Licensed Practical Nurse degree from Pierre School of Nursing in 1979. In 2008, Jean obtained her Associate Registered Nurse degree from the University of South Dakota and in 2009 she graduated from South Dakota State University with her Bachelor’s in Nursing. In 2015, Jean obtained her Family Nurse Practitioner degree from Mount Marty College and has worked as a Nurse Practitioner at the Fort Thompson IHS since 2016. Previously, Jean worked as a Healthy Heart Program Coordinator and a Public Health Nurse (PHN) with Fort Thompson IHS.

Katie Augspurger is a Family Nurse Practitioner who joined Fort Thompson IHS in 2015. Katie obtained her Bachelor’s degree in Nursing in 2003 from South Dakota State University. She then went on to complete her Master’s degree in Nursing from South Dakota State University in 2009. Katie was most recently employed as a Nurse Practitioner in the Sioux Falls Sanford Emergency Department. Katie is originally from this area and was raised on her family’s nearby ranch.
Dr. Kelly comes from Washington D.C. to join IHS as a General Dentist. Born in Jamaica, she did undergraduate studies at LIU in New York and then completed her post graduate studies in Dentistry at Howard University.

She also served in the US Army Reserves where she retired as a LTC.

New Contract Dentist, Dr. Moore received her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from University of Missouri – Kansas City. After completing dental school and working as an Independent Contractor for several military bases in the U.S., she opened her own dental office in the Virgin Islands, which lasted for 23 years before retiring in 2013.

Daecia LaRoche is the Credentialing Technician, located in Dr McFee’s office and her phone number is 245-1567. Daecia in an enrolled member of the Northern Cheyenne Nation. She received a minor in Business Management and Allied Health. She is also a certified Wildland Firefighter Type 4. In her spare time, she enjoys knitting, cross stitch, and Native American beadwork and hand embroidery.
Lona Longbrake has started her new position of Diabetes Nurse Educator in the Outpatient Department. Her desk is located in the clinic and her phone number is the same at 605-245-1524. Lona graduated from Presentation College with an Associate’s Degree in 2004, received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Presentation College in 2013, and earned a Master’s Degree in Nursing and Healthcare Administration in 2016. Ms. Longbrake started at Fort Thompson IHS Health Center in 2010 as a clinic nurse in the Outpatient department, and in 2014, she transferred to the Healthy Heart Program as the Program Coordinator. Lona grew up on the Cheyenne River Reservation and is a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. She currently lives in Pierre, has two children, Jay and Kayla, and two grandchildren, Hailee (9) and Jaxon (6). In her spare time, she loves spending time with family and friends.

Welcome Ms. Jacy Halverson as the newest addition to the dental department as a Dental Assistant. Jacy is from the Pine Ridge area and is part of the Heathershaw clan, stating “they rodeo, I watch.” She has lived near Cedar Rapids for the past 8 years, and has been a volunteer firefighter. She has a cat named Gym, and Gym is super awesome at playing fetch. She played dodgeball, kickball, sand volleyball, and bike club before moving here, so she is looking to join any sport she can. She also loves to lift weights and hates running.

Ms. Ella Rencountre has officially started her position as Medical Support Assistant in the Dental Department. She remains at the scheduling desk for the Dental Department and can be reached at 605-245-1518. Ella started working at Fort Thompson IHS Health Center in 2010 in the dental department. She was born and raised in Fort Thompson and is a member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe.
What is Hay Fever?
Hay fever, also known as allergic rhinitis, is caused by an allergic response to allergens, which in spring is most commonly pollen.

What Are The Signs & Symptoms Of Hay Fever?
- Runny, itchy nose
- Nasal congestion
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Water, itchy eyes
- Post nasal drip
- Sore throat

What Can I Do?
Reduce Exposure to Triggers
- Stay indoors on dry, windy days – best time to go outside is after a good rain
- Wear glasses or sunglasses while outside to help protect eyes
- Remove clothes you’ve worn outside and shower to rinse pollen
- Use air conditioning at home and in car instead of opening windows

Over-The-Counter Remedies
- Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting over-the-counter medications
- Antihistamines: help relieve sneezing, itching, runny nose and watery eyes
  - Claritin
  - Alavert
  - Zyrtec
  - Allegra
- Decongestants: provide relief from nasal congestion
  - Sudafed
  - Afrin
- Nasal Sprays
  - Flonase
  - Cromolyn

Hay Fever Vs. Common Cold

Fort Thompson Indian Health Service Health Center
COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

What Is Colorectal Cancer?
Colorectal cancer is cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum. Sometimes it is called colon cancer. The colon is the large intestine or large bowel. The rectum is the passageway that connects the colon to the anus.

Screening Saves Lives
Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the United States, but it doesn’t have to be. If you are 50 or older, getting a colorectal cancer screening test could save your life.

Here’s how
Colorectal cancer usually starts from precancerous polyps in the colon or rectum. A polyp is a growth that shouldn’t be there. Over time, some polyps can turn into cancer.

Screening tests can find precancerous polyps, so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. Screening tests also can find colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best.

Who Gets Colorectal Cancer?
- Both men and women can get it.
- It is most often found in people 50 or older.
- The risk increases with age.

Are You at High Risk?
Your risk for colorectal cancer may be higher than average if:

- You or a close relative have had colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer.
- You have inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn’s disease, or ulcerative colitis.
- You have a genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer.

People at high risk for colorectal cancer may need earlier or more frequent tests than other people. Talk to your primary care provider about screening and how often you should be tested.
Hepatitis Awareness Month

May is Hepatitis Awareness Month. In the United States, the most common types of viral hepatitis are hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. While each can produce similar symptoms, each hepatitis virus affects the liver differently, has different routes of transmission, and has different populations that are commonly affected.

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection that can range from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months. The hepatitis A virus is usually spread when a person ingests the virus from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by feces or stool from an infected person. Hepatitis A can be easily prevented with a safe and effective vaccine, which is recommended for all children at one year of age.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a liver disease that results from infection with the hepatitis B virus. For some people, especially those infected as infants, the infection leads to a chronic or lifelong illness. The hepatitis B virus is spread primarily when blood, semen, or certain other body fluids from a person infected enters the body of someone who is not infected. The virus can be spread through sexual transmission and through contact with blood, such as sharing injection drug equipment. The hepatitis B virus can also be passed from an infected woman to her baby at birth, if her baby does not receive the hepatitis B vaccine.

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is a liver disease that results from infection with the hepatitis C virus. Most people who become infected with the virus go on to develop a chronic infection that causes serious liver problems. The hepatitis C virus is usually spread when blood from a person infected enters the body of someone who is not infected. Today, most people become infected with hepatitis C by sharing needles, syringes, or any other equipment to inject drugs. In fact, rates of new infections have been on the rise in young people who inject drugs in recent years. While rare, hepatitis C can be transmitted sexually, as well as from an infected woman to her baby. In the past, hepatitis C was spread through blood transfusions and organ transplants. However, widespread screening of the blood supply began in 1990 and the hepatitis C virus was virtually eliminated from the blood supply by 1992.

People born from 1945-1965, or baby boomers, are five times more likely to have hepatitis C. Unfortunately, the reason that baby boomers have high rates of hepatitis C is not completely understood. Most baby boomers are believed to have become infected in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s when transmission of hepatitis C was the highest.

To get tested or vaccinated for viral hepatitis you should schedule an appointment to see your Primary Care Provider at the Ft. Thompson I.H.S. Health Center at 245-1516.
Community Support Resources

TUESDAY:

Alcoholic Anonymous Meeting
Catholic Church – 7PM-8PM

WEDNESDAY:

Aftercare
I.H.S. Behavioral Health Building – 2:30PM-3:30PM

FRIDAY:

Talking Circle
I.H.S. Behavioral Health Building – 10AM-12PM

***Contact the I.H.S. Behavioral Health Department at 245-1546 to schedule an appointment or to find out more information***
Fort Thompson I.H.S. Health Center  
Dental Department

Please call 605-245-1518 to schedule an appointment

The Ft. Thompson Dental Clinic will see emergencies at:

- 8 a.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesday emergencies will be seen at 12:30 p.m.
- Emergencies consist of traumatic injuries, pain or swelling only, not chipped teeth or broken or lost fillings.
- Dental cleanings should be scheduled so that a treatment plan can be established for all other dental work.
The Mission of the Fort Thompson Indian Health Center is to raise the health status of the American Indian to the highest level possible.

The Vision of the Fort Thompson Indian Health Center is to provide quality, accessible, safe and comprehensive health services sensitive to the needs of the American people.

The Fort Thompson Indian Health Center values a healthy Native American population attained in cooperation with the community and the people we serve by providing quality health promotion/disease prevention and comprehensive primary care services.

**Ft. Thompson Health Center phone numbers**

- Medical Appointments: 245-1516
- Dental Appointments: 245-1518
- Optometry Appointments: 245-1556
- Behavioral Health Appointments: 245-1546
- CHR Office: 245-1520
- Immunization Clinic: 245-1587
- Pharmacy: 245-1545
- Physical Therapy: 245-1618
- Wowasake Wellness Center: 245-1619