



YELLOWHAWK
TRIBAL HEALTH CENTER

+ Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center
46314 Timine Way
Pendleton, OR 97801

+ P 541.966.9830
+ F 541.240.8749
+ yellowhawk.org

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Contact: Shanna Hamilton, Public Relations Manager
541.240.8459 or shannahamilton@yellowhawk.org

MISSION – The Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center (Yellowhawk) Health Commission (Commission) is excited to announce the adoption of their 2022 Annual Budget. Within the budget there are several items aimed at employee retention, recruitment and new funding for the first steps of assessing the feasibility of a Wellness Center on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

In several sessions over the past few months the Commission spoke at great lengths with Executive staff regarding the morale of their current employees and recruitment of new hires. During those discussions the Commission approved three recruitment and retention items. The first was introduced as an addition to the 2021 budget becoming effective Nov. 23, 2021, is a \$2,000 bonus for new employees. This bonus is paid to new employees upon completing their 90 day orientation, and is contingent upon an agreement to stay with Yellowhawk for at least two years. Those who join Yellowhawk and decide to seek employment elsewhere before the end of that two years will be required to repay the bonus.

In the passing of the new-hire bonus it was also decided to adequately compensate staff who have been with the clinic previously, they will also receive \$2,000 bonus for their service, when signing a two year employment agreement.

Interim Yellowhawk CEO Aaron Hines said of the bonuses, “I want to thank our Human Resources department for proposing the idea of bonuses for our staff. I also want to thank the Health Commission for approving it once we proposed it to them. I’m happy that we were able to find a way to reward the hard work that our staff has been doing this past year and a half. Our staff have worked tirelessly and have stepped up to the plate every time we’ve asked them. I know many are facing extreme work fatigue, but I want them to know that I appreciate them, the Health Commission appreciates them and the community and patients appreciate them.”

The final recruitment item approved a new minimum wage of \$20 per hour for all full-time, seasonal and temporary employees. This new minimum wage takes effect January 1, 2022.

Health Commission Chair Shawna Gavin said of the raise in pay, “We are excited to be able to honor employees for their hard work and dedication to this facility. They put their heart and soul

into their work and should be compensated appropriately. The cost of living has grown leaps and bounds over the years and it is imperative that wages keep up with that growth.”

Another large budget item to get adopted in the 2022 budget was a \$1,000,000 allocation to conduct a feasibility study for a Wellness Center. The Wellness Center has been a priority for the Health Commission for many years and after achieving many of their previous priorities they are excited to see one more dream on its way to fruition.

“The Wellness Center is more than a work out facility. It is more than a community hub, it is a path to true change for the foundation of our patients’ lives. Our People have long been dedicated to holistic health but due to barriers introduced to our way of life, the values that we hold so dear have been compromised. Providing a physical space to re-center our mental, physical and spiritual health will have a positive generational ripple effect for years to come. Our children’s children will reap the benefits of this visionary project. The Health Commission is deeply appreciative of the work staff has put into this decades-old vision and we’re excited we were finally able to get the ball rolling,” Gavin said.

The feasibility allocation was introduced to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Board of Trustees during Annual Work Plan and Budget Discussions over the past two months. The Yellowhawk budget was officially adopted November 15 during the Board of Trustees Monday morning meeting.

“A new clinic and Wellness Center have both been on the radar for our Tribe and recently we found old strategic plans for Yellowhawk from the 1970’s. Our elders had a vision back then for our community. Today we work in a new clinic that took years of persistent planning. Now we get to work on the Wellness Center. We are fulfilling the hopes and dreams of those that came before us. I’m excited that we’re able to do this and keep the dream alive,” Hines said.



Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center is owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. It provides primary healthcare and additional services to more than 3,000 American Indian/Alaska Native patients.

Yellowhawk Vision: Our Tribal community achieves optimal health through a culture of wellness.

Yellowhawk Mission: It is our mission to empower our Tribal community with opportunities to learn and experience healthy lifestyle.