

# June NEWSLETTER

# 2026



*Aakom-Kiyii Health Services will ensure maintenance, delivery and enhancement of quality health services for Piikani Nation. Our vision is to empower Piikani Nation members in their health and wellness journey.*



# Recovery *Starts Here*

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On Monday, May 4, Akoka'tssini Mental Wellness held their grand opening for the Medical Detox Centre. Our organization is looking forward to the positive impact this service will have in supporting Nation members on their road to recovery.

We received a tremendous amount of support during the grand opening from our community, various news outlets, Recovery Alberta, the Blackfoot Confederacy, the Peigan Crowlodge Elder Society, Fresh Start Recovery, Foothills Detox, City of Lethbridge Outreach Team, Blood Tribe Department of Health as well as Piikani Chief and Council. Our organization is incredibly grateful for the overwhelming support and coverage we received.

Not only have we celebrated our grand opening, but the Medical Detox Centre is now fully operational and accepting applications and referrals. Anyone interested in submitting an intake form can access it through our website or contact the Medical Detox Centre directly for assistance at (403) 965-3279.





# Honouring 90-days *of Healing & Recovery*

We are proud to announce the successful completion of our first 90-day treatment cycle at Inii Healing House, with 10 residents graduating from the program. This milestone represents the strength, dedication, and resilience of everyone who committed themselves to healing and recovery.

Following graduation, all residents have transitioned into the next stages of their recovery journeys, including transitional housing, additional treatment programming, sober living environments, and other supportive recovery pathways. We are especially proud to share that one graduate has moved into our Residents in Recovery Transition Program in Piikani, where Recovery Coaches and Support Staff will continue providing daily guidance, mentorship, and ongoing support.





Over the past 90 days, residents participated in a combination of psychoeducational programming and culturally grounded recovery supports designed to promote healing of the mind, body, spirit, and emotions. The integration of cultural teachings and recovery-focused education continues to be a vital part of our approach to wellness and long-term recovery.

As we celebrate this achievement, we also recognize the growing need for these services within our communities. We currently have a large waiting list and have been actively completing intakes for the next intake of residents who will begin another 90-day cycle of treatment and recovery programming.

We extend our gratitude to our staff, Elders, Recovery Coaches, support workers, community partners, and families who continue to walk alongside our residents on their healing journeys. Most importantly, we honour the courage of our graduates and wish them continued strength and success in recovery.



# Piikanissini: *Learning from Our Elders*

On Tuesday, May 19, 2026, Akoka'tssini Mental Wellness staff scheduled a visit with Chief Peter Strikes With A Gun and his wife, Jeannie, at their residence. During this visit, we had the honor of spending time with Elder Mark Strikes With A Gun, our oldest male Piikani member. We were warmly welcomed and invited to make ourselves comfortable.

Throughout our time together, our Elders shared many meaningful stories—stories of encouragement, compassion, and the importance of acceptance for one another. These teachings reminded us of the values that continue to guide our community. Chief Peter acknowledged the dedication of Akoka'tssini staff and the important work being done. He encouraged us to continue listening closely to the people we support—to truly hear their voices and understand their needs as we move forward together. We provided lunch for everyone in attendance, creating space for connection and shared experience.

This visit brought us back to the teachings of Piikanissini—the importance of being respectful, caring, and supportive to one another. By upholding these values, we can help individuals on their journeys of self-discovery and healing. Together, we recognize that reconciliation begins within each of us, and through that shared commitment, healing can grow within our community.



# Cancer Navigation

*Aakom-Kiyii Health Services has introduced a new cancer navigator position to help guide piikani members in their cancer journey.*

We are pleased to share that the Cancer Navigator will now be available four days per week, working closely alongside our Home Care and Community Health teams to provide additional support and guidance for Community Members and their families throughout their cancer journey. This role is designed to ensure individuals facing cancer have access to compassionate assistance, advocacy, and culturally supportive care every step of the way.

The Cancer Navigator will provide support in a variety of ways, including hospital visits, home visits, and accompanying patients to and from medical appointments when needed. Having someone available to help navigate appointments, treatment plans, and available services can make a significant difference for individuals and families during what can often be a difficult and overwhelming time.



## *Lani Black Water Cancer Navigator*

We would like to introduce Lani Black Water, who will be taking on the role as our Cancer Navigator. Lani is a Registered Nurse who you may already recognize, as she has been serving our community for many years and was previously part of our Community Health Department.

With her nursing experience and dedication to community wellness, Lani will play an important role in helping expand services at the Health Centre. We are excited to welcome her into this position and look forward to the positive impact she will have in our community.

# Mens Health Month

June is Men's Health Month which focuses on raising awareness about preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of diseases. It focuses on physical and mental well-being, challenging men to prioritize routine check-ups, regular exercise, and open discussions about mental health.

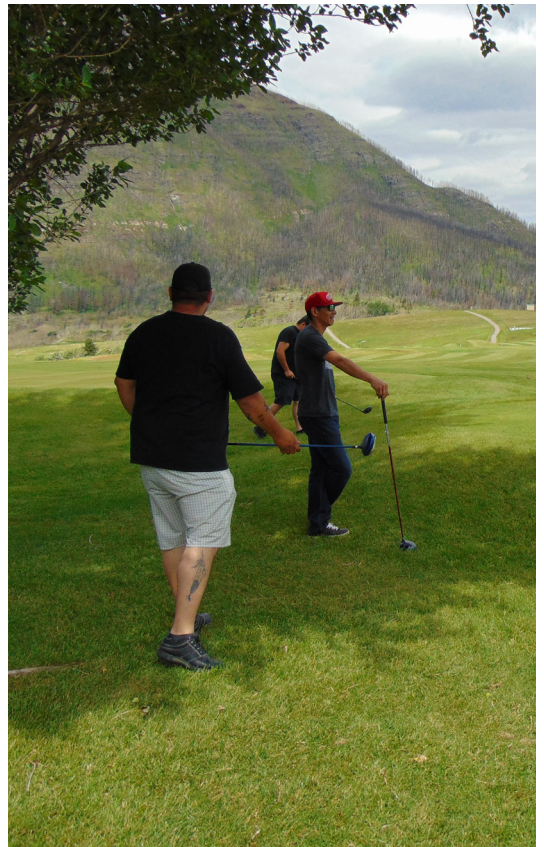
Men's Health Month emphasizes several key pillars of a healthy lifestyle:

- Get Screened:** Regular check-ups for prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and cardiovascular health are critical for catching issues early.
- Move Your Body:** Consistent physical activity is essential for maintaining muscle mass and bone density.
- Prioritize Mental Health:** Men are encouraged to break the stigma around mental health, manage stress, and reach out for support when needed

As part of Men's Health Month this June, Aakom-Kiyii Health Services is preparing to host a special Golfing for Men's Health event focused on promoting wellness, connection, and healthy living within our community.

The event will include separate golf days for both men and women, along with informational booths focused on men's health and some of the top health concerns and challenges we continue to see within our community.

Dates and additional event details are currently being finalized. Community members are encouraged to stay tuned to our social media platforms for upcoming announcements, registration information, and event updates.



Aakom-Kiyii Health Services is committed to providing ongoing programming and supports for the men of the Piikani Nation throughout the year not just in June. Programs and supports include:

- Golfing for Men's Health:** AKHS hosts an annual golf event for men with interactive presentations from our health care staff focusing on the top health related issues affecting the men in our community.

- Movember:** The Movember Campaign is an annual event held in November where participants grow mustaches to raise awareness for men's health issues, specifically prostate cancer, testicular cancer, mental health, and suicide prevention. Participants can also walk or run 60 km to bring awareness to suicide and depression.

- PSA Testing and Screening:** A PSA (prostate-specific antigen) test is a simple blood test that measures the amount of a protein produced by the prostate gland.

- Kidney and Liver Health Checks:** Kidney and liver check-ups are highly important for men. Both organs perform vital detoxification and metabolic functions. Because diseases affecting these organs often show no symptoms in their early stages, regular blood tests are crucial for the early detection and management of potential damage

- Stress Resiliency:** Stress resiliency is a man's ability to adapt to adversity and manage pressure without compromising his well-being. It is vital for preventing the internalization of stress, protecting cardiovascular health, and avoiding burnout. Cultivating this resilience ensures better mental clarity and emotional longevity. AKHS staff trained in Stress Resiliency help clients navigate and manage stress.

- Buddy Up Program:** Promoting peer-to-peer support, recognizing that men often prefer connecting socially in informal settings rather than pursuing traditional counseling or therapy with aims to break the stigma around mental health and traditional masculine norms (like stoicism and self-reliance) that often cause men to suffer in silence.

- Vitals Health Checks:** Aakom-Kiyii Health Services provides vital health checks (or vital signs) which are standard, objective measurements of the body's essential, life-sustaining functions. They are crucial because they serve as the first line of defense in detecting underlying diseases, assessing physical fitness, and indicating sudden, dangerous shifts in a person's health

- Sexual Health Screening:** AKHS Provides S.T.I. (Sexually Transmitted Infections) screening, testing and treatment through private and confidential standards.



# Diabetes Walk

On May 25, 2026, Aakom-Kiyii Health Services hosted its first Diabetes Awareness Walking Challenge promoting physical activity and diabetes education. The turnout for the event was great, over 50 community members from all ages showed up to take part. AKHS staff were onsite to take blood glucose readings, blood pressure measurements and educate on proper nutrition and physical activity as preventative and treatment measures in dealing with Type 2 Diabetes.



## What is Type 2 Diabetes?

*Type 2 Diabetes is a long-term condition in which the body either:*

- Does not use insulin properly (called insulin resistance), or
- Does not make enough insulin to keep blood sugar at healthy levels.

Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas that helps sugar (glucose) move from the blood into cells for energy. When this process doesn't work well, glucose builds up in the bloodstream, leading to high blood sugar.

## Common symptoms

*Some people have no symptoms at first, but possible signs include:*

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Feeling very tired
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing cuts or infections
- Unexplained weight changes
- Risk factors

## Type 2 diabetes is more common in people who:

- Are overweight or inactive
- Have a family history of diabetes
- Are older (though it can happen at any age)
- Have high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Had gestational diabetes during pregnancy

## Why It Matters

*If untreated, it can damage:*

- Heart and blood vessels
- Kidneys
- Eyes
- Nerves



## Treatment and management

*Many people manage it with:*

- Healthy eating
- Regular exercise
- Weight management
- Blood sugar monitoring
- Medications or insulin if needed

Type 2 diabetes is different from Type 1 diabetes, where the body makes little or no insulin because of an autoimmune condition.

# Upcoming Events

## *Screening Mammogram Bus*



On June 1 and 2, Aakom-Kiyii Health Services will be holding a mammogram screening in the main building parking lot. For any questions call 403-965-3809.

## *Women's Wellness*



Women's Wellness Day will be on June 2nd from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM in the Aakom-Kiyii Health Services parking lot. We will have information booths available, PAP testing, mammogram screening, sexual health bingo and lunch.

## *Health Awareness for Youth*



On June 26, from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM Aakom-Kiyii Health Services will be hosting a health awareness event catered towards youth in the community. The event will take place at the multipurpose building and will have a healthy lifestyle bingo at 11:30 AM and 1:00 PM.

## *Enviromental & Water Workshop*



Aakom-Kiyii Health Services will be hosting an Environmental and Water Workshop on June 16, 2026. The workshop will be located at the Piikani Community Hall from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

## *Midwifery Camp*



Aakom-Kiyii Health Services will be hosting a midwifery camp on July 21 and 22. Dates and additional event details are currently being finalized. Community members are encouraged to stay tuned to our social media platforms for upcoming event updates.

## Learning Concepts

- Living things depend on each other
- Plants, animals, birds and insects are all part of my environment
- Trees are important to everyone and must be protected
- Recycling helps protect mother earth
- All living things need water
- Water must be respected
- We are part of the earth and it is part of us

# Head Start

## Current Skills

- Interacts with trees through guided sensory experiences
- Shows respect towards all living creatures
- Cares for a growing plant
- Identifies the use of water
- Participates in recycling as a way to protect mother earth
- Sorts items and explains the criteria by which the classification is made
- Matches a set of objects to the numerals 9-10
- Puts sets of objects in order



## *Recent Dates*

May 27: Last day of classes (group 1)





May 28: Last day of classes (group 2)

June 3: Graduation at Multipurpose (5:00 PM start)



# Contact Us

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-  403-965-3809
-  [aakomkiyiihealthservices.com](http://aakomkiyiihealthservices.com)
-  Piikanihealth
-  Aakom-Kiyii Health Services