

August NEWSLETTER



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.



Beat the Heat

Staying Safe During Extreme Heat

Southern Alberta has recently been experiencing extreme heat, with daytime temperatures reaching the mid-30s°C. As temperatures rise, so does the risk of heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. At Aakom-Kiyii Health Services, we want to help our community to stay safe by recognizing the signs of heat-related illness and taking simple steps to prevent it.

Recognizing Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion can develop when your body becomes overheated and dehydrated. Symptoms may include:

- Heavy sweating
- High body temperature
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Dizziness or fainting
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rapid breathing and heartbeat
- Extreme thirst
- Dark urine or decreased urination
- Skin rash

If you experience these symptoms, move to a cool place immediately, drink water, and rest. If symptoms worsen or do not improve, seek medical attention.

Recognizing Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is a life-threatening medical emergency. Symptoms include:

- Very high body temperature
- Confusion or lack of coordination
- Dizziness or fainting
- Hot, red skin with little or no sweating

If you suspect someone is experiencing heat stroke, call 911 immediately. While waiting for emergency responders, move the person to a cool or shaded area, if possible, apply cool water to large areas of their skin and fan them to help lower their body temperature.



Who Is Most at Risk?

Some people are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, including:

- **Older Adults:** may have chronic health conditions, take medications that affect the body's ability to cool itself or limited access to air conditioning.
- **Infants and Young Children:** Children's bodies heat up more quickly than adults, and they rely on caregivers to help keep them cool and hydrated.
- **People with Chronic Health Conditions:** Individuals with heart disease, breathing difficulties, diabetes, or mental health conditions, as well as those taking certain medications, may be at greater risk.
- **People Who Work or Exercise Outdoors:** Construction workers, road crews, farmers, and anyone spending extended periods outdoors should take extra precautions to avoid overheating.



Tips to Stay Cool

The best way to prevent heat-related illness is to stay cool and hydrated.

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day—even before you feel thirsty.
- Eat water-rich foods like fruits and vegetables.
- Schedule outdoor activities during the early morning or evening when temperatures are lower.
- Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing made from breathable fabrics.
- Protect yourself from the sun with a wide-brimmed, breathable hat or an umbrella.
- Seek shade whenever possible. Tree-covered areas are often much cooler than direct sunlight.
- Limit prolonged exposure to the sun.
- Spend time in cool places such as air-conditioned buildings, shopping centres, grocery stores, libraries, places of worship, or community facilities.
- Take cool showers or baths to help lower your body temperature.

Stay Safe This Summer

Extreme heat can affect anyone, but with a few simple precautions you can reduce your risk and protect yourself and those around you. Check in on family members, neighbours, Elders, and anyone who may need extra support during periods of extreme heat.

Stay cool, stay hydrated, and stay safe.

Cyclosporiasis *Parasite*

The Cyclosporiasis Parasite outbreak has been on the rise and has raised concerns around food safety. At Aakom-Kiyii Health Services, we want our community to have access to current information and steps that can be taken to reduce your risk. The Cyclosporiasis Parasite may also be referred to as Cyclospora which is a microscopic parasite that can contaminate food or water that causes an intestinal illness. Symptoms may include diarrhea, loss of appetite, stomach cramps, nausea, fatigue, bloating, and weight loss. Symptoms usually begin about one week after exposure. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada:

- There are currently no active Canadian recalls related to domestic lettuce.
- The lettuce linked to the recent U.S. Cyclospora outbreak was supplied through a central Mexico producer and was not distributed in the Canadian market.
- Cyclospora is not commonly found on food and is not present in Canada's drinking water.
- Choosing fresh, locally grown Canadian produce when available is one way to help reduce your risk.

While the overall risk in Canada remains low, you can still implement food handling tips to further ensure reduced risk, including:

- Choose whole heads of lettuce instead of pre-bagged or pre-shredded salad mixes when possible.
- Remove and discard the outer leaves of lettuce before washing.
- Rinse fresh produce thoroughly under clean running water before eating or preparing it. While washing helps reduce dirt and bacteria, it may not remove all microscopic parasites.

With the risk of Cyclospora being higher in other countries there are tips you can follow to practice food safety when traveling.

- Drink tap water where it is known to be safe, or choose bottled water if you are unsure.
- Follow the rule: "Boil it, cook it, peel it, or leave it."
- Wash your hands frequently with soap, especially before eating or preparing food, after using the washroom, changing diapers, or after contact with animals or someone who is ill.
- Eat foods that are thoroughly cooked and served hot.
- Avoid foods that have been sitting at room temperature.
- Do not eat raw or undercooked meat, poultry, seafood, or shellfish.
- Eat fruits and vegetables only if they have been washed with safe water or peeled by you.
- Avoid food from street vendors.
- Choose only pasteurized dairy products and fruit juices.
- Avoid higher-risk foods such as buffets, pre-cut melons, bagged salads, and raw sprouts.

Although the recent Cyclospora outbreak has received significant media attention, the current risk to Canadians remains low. Staying informed, practicing proper food handling, and choosing locally grown produce whenever possible are simple ways to help protect yourself and your family.

If you experience persistent diarrhea or other symptoms after eating fresh produce or returning from travel, contact your healthcare provider for assessment and treatment.

Pancake Breakfast

Aakom-Kiyii Health Services will be hosting its annual Pancake Breakfast on August 13, in the AKHS parking lot. With breakfast starting at 8:00 a.m. and will run until 12 p.m.

This annual event is an opportunity to bring our community together for a morning of delicious pancakes, socializing, and entertainment. We invite everyone to join us as we connect with one another.





Head Start

Registration is open!

The Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve program is a warm, welcoming space where your child will play, laugh, learn, and grow! Through fun, hands-on activities, children will make new friends and explore exciting experiences designed to create beautiful, lasting memories. We cannot wait to welcome your family into a program where every day is an adventure in learning.

Why Choose Aboriginal Head Start?

- No cost: Completely free for your family
- Free transportation: Bus services provided within site-specific boundaries
- Nutritious meals: Healthy breakfast and warm lunch served daily
- Specialized services: Access to developmental supports and resources
- Family guidance: Ongoing social and community support
- Parent education: Interactive workshops and learning groups

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Inii Healing House: *Update*

At Inii Healing House, the past few months have been filled with healing, learning, and meaningful connection. Residents have embraced cultural teachings through weekly Wellbriety sessions led by alumni, Elder teachings with Melody Provost, Jesse Plain Eagle, and Eric Crowshoe, and Blackfoot sweat ceremonies. Hands-on cultural activities such as mint and sweetgrass picking, moccasin making, drum making, and medicine bag making have helped strengthen cultural identity while creating opportunities to share knowledge and traditions. Community sharing circles, along with visits to Beauvais Lake and Waterton, have also provided time for reflection, connection to the land, and building lasting relationships.





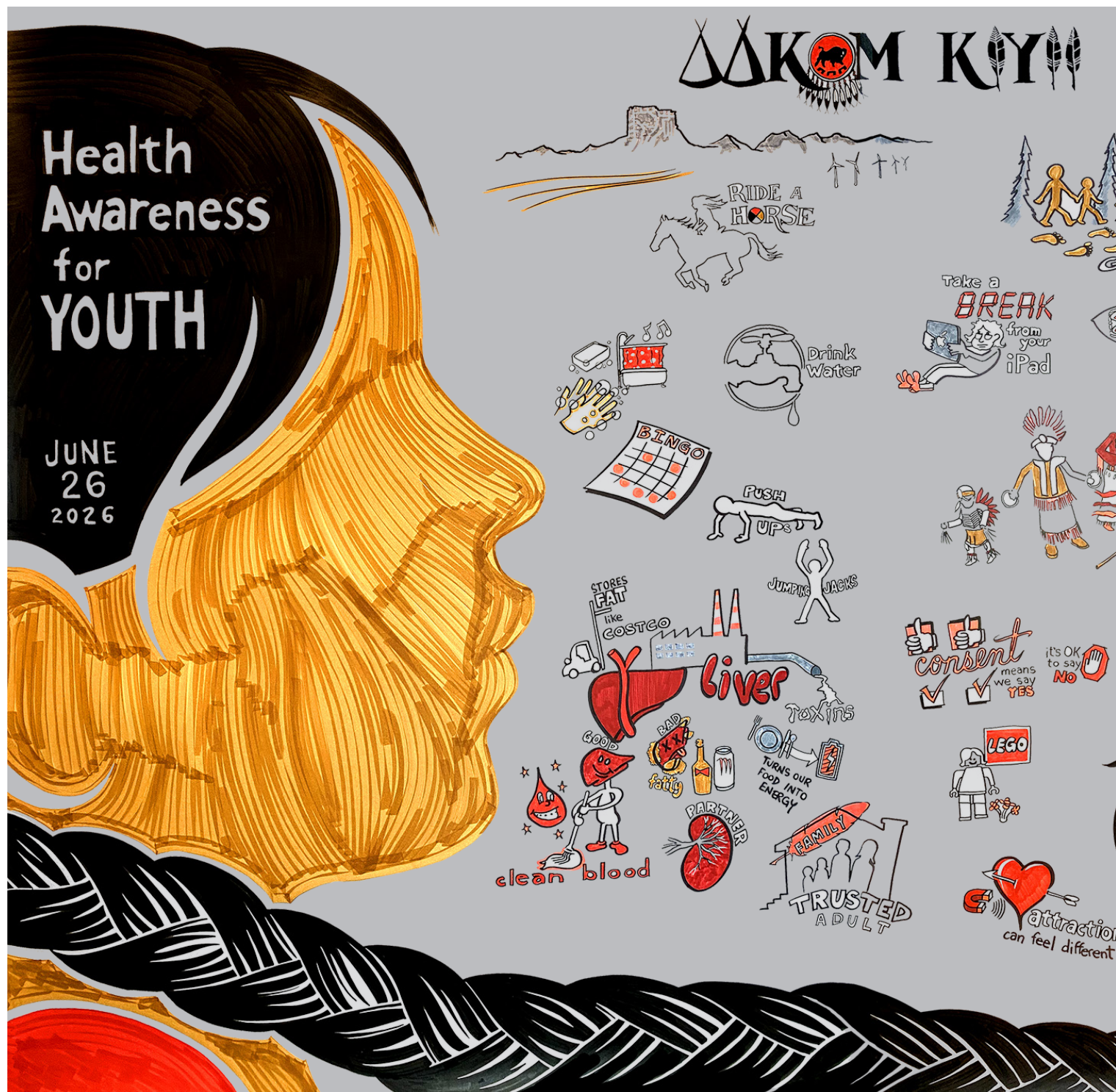
An important part of that cultural connection has come through the kitchen. Our talented cook, Shelby Provost, has thoughtfully incorporated traditional Blackfoot cuisine into residents' meals, using food as a way to reconnect people with their culture and heritage. From homemade fry bread to hearty buffalo stew and other traditional dishes, Shelby has created more than nourishing meals—she has helped foster a sense of belonging, sparked conversations about tradition, and reminded many residents of home and family.

Recovery continues to grow through a balance of cultural practices, wellness, and everyday life skills. Residents participate in AA meetings twice each week, daily recovery programming, and life skills that support long-term success. Every other week, they enjoy the opportunity to work with horses at Blue Rein Ranch, where trust, confidence, and resilience are nurtured through equine therapy. They have also given back to the community through tree planting, demonstrating the importance of caring for the land while supporting personal growth. We are especially proud to celebrate one of our residents, who recently made Indigenous court history—a remarkable milestone that reflects the strength, determination, and hope that can flourish when people are supported on their healing journey. We are grateful to everyone who continues to walk alongside us as we build healthier individuals, families, and communities together.



Youth Health Awareness

On June 26, Aakom-Kiyii Health Services proudly hosted its Health Awareness for Youth event. We would like to take a moment to recognize the meaningful artwork created during this event, which captures the spirit, connections, and messages shared throughout the day.



Youth Connect: *Recreation & Wellness Fair*

Speaking of our youth and health promotion, our Community Health Department also hosted our Youth Connect: Recreation and Wellness Fair on July 15. Our youth had the opportunity to play basketball, learn about their health and wellness through interactive education, connect with local resources, and win prizes throughout the day.



Overdose Awareness Day

August 31

From Survival to Storytelling: The Journey Behind SUGAR

Some stories are imagined. SUGAR was survived. SUGAR is a solo theatre work that grew out of one of the darkest chapters of my life. After choosing to leave active addiction behind, I experienced 28 days of drug-induced psychosis. I could no longer tell what was real and what was not. Recovery became more than getting sober. It became about finding myself again.

As a Blackfoot and Two-Spirit artist from Piikani Nation, I have always believed stories can heal. They can preserve culture, create understanding, and remind people they are not alone.

My artistic journey has taken me across the country. I trained at the Centre for Indigenous Theatre in Toronto before continuing my studies in musical theatre in Prince Edward Island. Those experiences gave me the technical skills to tell stories. My life gave me the reason.

SUGAR follows a young Two-Spirit Indigenous man who is drawn into the glitz and glamour of Calgary's nightlife. At first, everything feels exciting. The city promises freedom, belonging, and possibility. Before long, those promises begin to unravel, leaving him caught in addiction, isolation, and survival.

The production moves between two worlds. One is driven by addiction. The other is guided by recovery. Theatre, movement, music, and song allow those worlds to exist side by side, showing not only what addiction takes away but also what healing can restore.

This work would not exist without community. Director and dramaturg Justin Many Fingers has helped shape SUGAR through the Niitoyis Method, a Blackfoot approach to dramaturgy that honours Indigenous ways of creating and sharing stories. His guidance has kept the work culturally grounded while challenging me to dig deeper with every revision.

Composer Anthony Tony Toosick Tootosis has created an original score that gives the production its heartbeat. His music carries the audience through moments of celebration, grief, fear, and hope.



Earlier this year, SUGAR was presented as a work-in-progress at Sage Theatre's IGNITE! Festival in Calgary. With support from Decidedly Jazz Danceworks, we developed a touring version of the production that can travel to treatment centres, schools, festivals, conferences, and communities across Canada.

The journey continues. I am honoured to have received support from the Canada Council for the Arts through its Research and Creation program. This investment allows us to continue developing SUGAR as we prepare for its next stage and eventual full premiere.

Recovery also inspired me to build something beyond the stage. This year I launched Plain Eagle Productions, an Indigenous-led company dedicated to creating theatre, facilitating workshops, delivering keynote presentations, and developing community programming. Every project is rooted in culture, lived experience, and the belief that art can create change.

There was a time when I was the person people wrote off. Today I stand in front of audiences sharing that story instead. If someone sees themselves in SUGAR, I hope they also see that recovery is possible. I hope they leave believing that their story is not over. That belief extends into my community.

On August 31 starting at 9:00 a.m., Plain Eagle Productions is partnering with Aakom-Kiyii Health Services to present an International Overdose Awareness Day gathering in Piikani Nation at the Multipurpose Building. Through ceremony, community resources, guest speakers, and a performance of SUGAR, we will honour those we have lost to opioid poisoning while creating space for healing, education, and hope.

Addiction has touched my life in deeply personal ways. This event is my way of giving something back to the community that helped save mine.



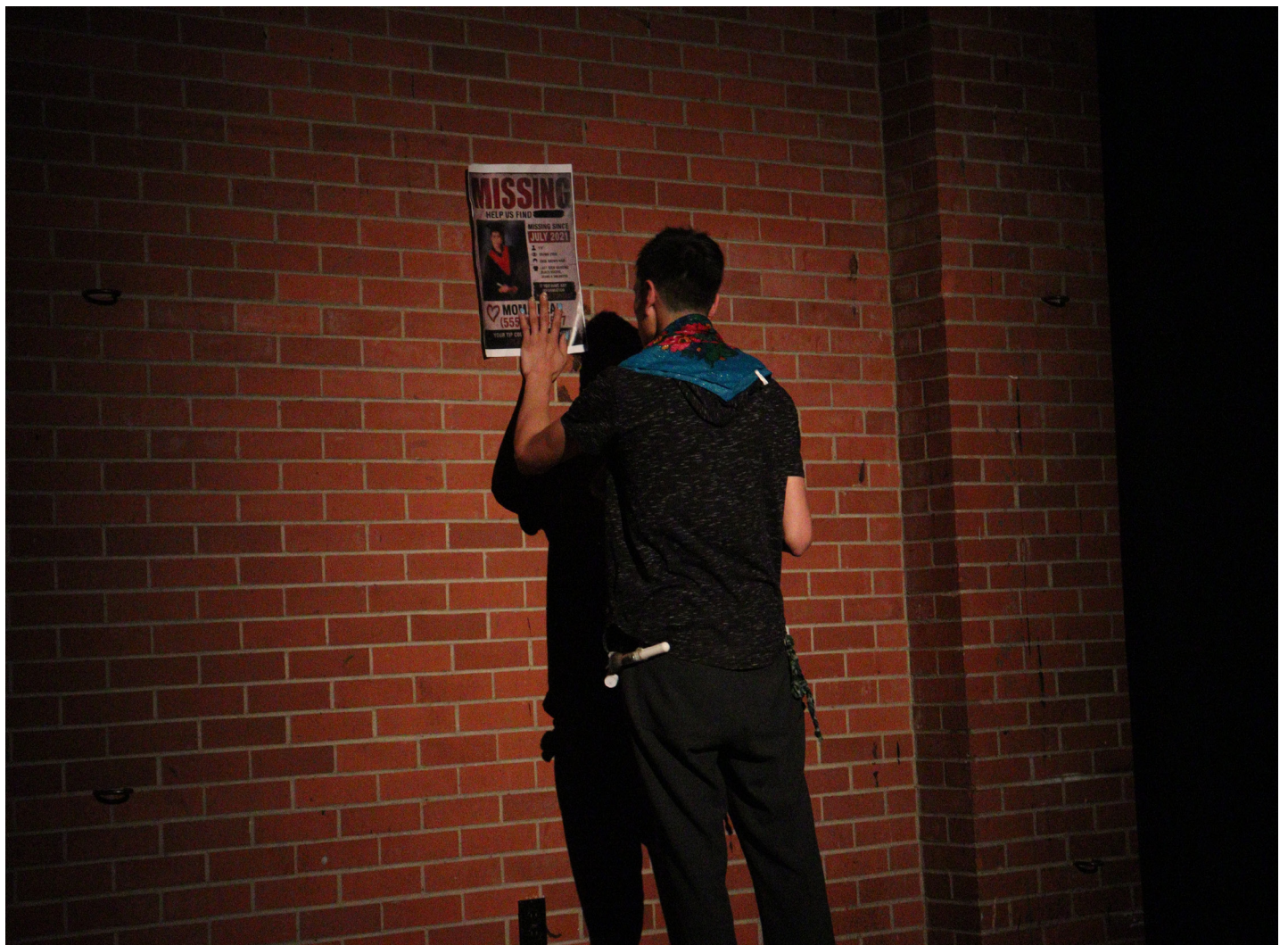
What's Next?

The next chapter of SUGAR arrives in February 2027, when the project returns to the stage through Decidedly Jazz Danceworks as part of Calgary's High-Performance Rodeo. From there, development will continue toward the full professional premiere, planned for Winter 2028.

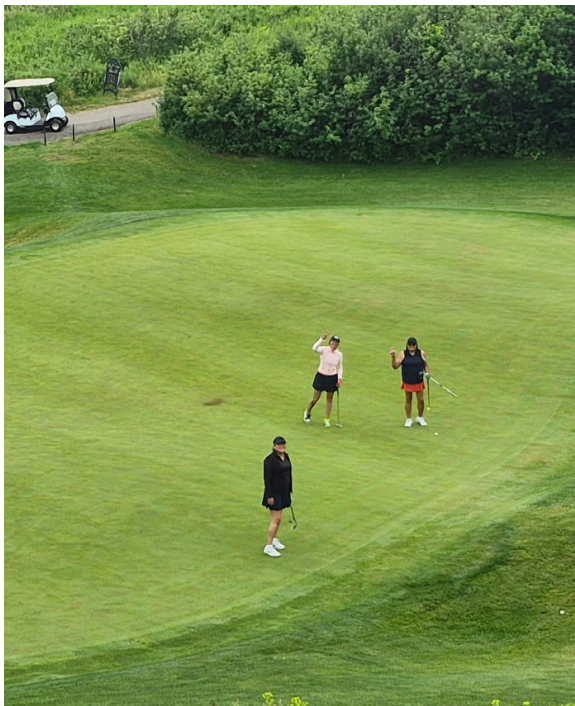
My hope is simple. That SUGAR starts conversations. That it challenges stigma. That it reminds people healing is possible. Because sometimes the stories that almost break us become the stories that help someone else find their way home.



By: Randy Plain Eagle



Women's Golf Tournament



On July 21, Aakom-Kiyii Health Services hosted its Women's Golf Tournament at Lee Creek Golf Course in Cardston in recognition of women's health. The event was a complete success, bringing women in our community together for a day of golf, food, informative booths and prizes. Throughout the tournament, participants had the opportunity to visit a variety of informative health booths covering topics such as vital sign checks, hypertension, sexual health, diabetes and several cancers common in women.

Although we have wrapped up both of our women's and men's golf tournaments for the year. Keep an eye out on our social media and newsletters for various events we have to support both men and women in their health



The GLOW Project:

Indigenous Elders Leading Healing Through Hepatitis C Education

The GLOW Project is built on the understanding that healing begins with knowledge, trust, and community. By creating safe spaces where Indigenous Elders share their wisdom and lived experiences, the project is helping to reduce the stigma surrounding Hepatitis C (Hep C) while encouraging community members to seek testing, treatment, and support.

For many Indigenous communities, health and wellness extend beyond physical care. Healing includes emotional, mental, spiritual, and cultural well-being. The GLOW Project recognizes that education is most meaningful when it is delivered through culturally grounded conversations that honour Indigenous knowledge, traditions, and lived experience.

At the heart of the project are Indigenous Elders, whose voices carry generations of resilience, strength, and wisdom. Through storytelling, sharing circles, and community gatherings, Elders create welcoming environments where people feel safe asking questions, discussing concerns, and learning about Hepatitis C without fear of judgment.

These conversations help dispel common myths about Hep C, explain how the virus is transmitted, and highlight that today's treatments are highly effective and can cure most people. Just as importantly, Elders emphasize that a Hep C diagnosis does not define a person. Instead, they encourage individuals to view treatment as part of a broader journey toward healing, wellness, and reclaiming health.



A group of four people are standing in front of a large, green, rocky mountain peak. On the left, a man in a blue and white checkered shirt and dark pants stands next to a man in a black cowboy hat and a black poncho. To the right of the man in the poncho is a woman wearing a black bucket hat and a black t-shirt with a blue graphic. On the far left, a person is partially visible, wearing a white t-shirt with a blue graphic and a black hat. In the background, a large, multi-story lodge with a green roof and wooden balconies is visible. A paved road and a parking lot with several cars are in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue.

The involvement of Elders reminds participants that healing is a shared journey. Traditional teachings encourage compassion, respect, and collective responsibility, reinforcing that every person deserves access to care, dignity, and hope. By weaving together Indigenous knowledge and modern medicine, the GLOW Project demonstrates that cultural teachings and healthcare can work hand in hand to improve community wellness.

As the project continues to grow, its impact reaches far beyond Hepatitis C education. It strengthens relationships, celebrates Indigenous leadership, and creates opportunities for meaningful conversations about health that honour culture and community values. Every story shared, every question answered, and every individual supported contributes to healthier communities and brighter futures.

The GLOW Project is more than an education initiative—it is a pathway toward healing. Guided by the wisdom of Indigenous Elders, it empowers communities with knowledge, encourages early diagnosis and treatment, and reminds us that healing happens together through connection, culture, and hope.

Piikani Pharmacy & Health Hub

Aakom-Kiyii Health Services is continuously seeking ways to break barriers to health care for Piikani Nation members. Through the Piikani Pharmacy community members can fill their prescriptions and access a physician closer to home. Thanks to a partnership with the Associate Clinic in Pincher Creek, visiting physicians to the nation has made this all possible. Please refer to the August Physician Schedule for upcoming clinic dates and call (403) 627-3321 to book an appointment.

The Piikani Pharmacy also offers access to laboratory services, making routine testing more convenient and accessible for community members.



AUGUST 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4 Dr. Tracy Burton	5 Dr. Beverly Burton	6	7	8
9	10	11 Dr. Tracy Burton	12 Dr. Ashley Rommens (AM only)	13 No Clinic	14	15
16	17	18 Dr. Kunmi Akarakiri	19	20 No Clinic	21	22
23	24	25 Dr. Beverly Burton	26	27 Dr. Tracy Burton	28	29

On October 1, 2025, Aakom-Kiyii Health Services celebrated the grand opening of the Healthbox located at the Health Hub across from the Piikani Pharmacy.

The Healthbox is an interactive touchscreen kiosk that provides free, anonymous, 24/7 access to important health resources and support services. It was introduced to help reduce barriers, increase access to health supplies and reduce the stigma.

The Healthbox offers a variety of free health and wellness supplies, including:

- HIV self-test kits
- Naloxone kits for opioid overdose response
- Harm reduction supplies
- Wellness items such as hygiene products, menstrual supplies, and basic toiletries



July Healthbox Stats

Most Popular Items Requested	Most Popular Items Viewed
Bottled Water	Ensure
Boost	Snack Pack
Ensure	Bottled Water
Snack Pack	Boost
First Aid Kit	First Aid Kit
Hygiene Kit	Dental Hygiene Kit
Dental Hygiene Kit	Nail Clippers

Item	Views	Requested Dispenses	Successful Dispenses	Dispense Errors
Boost	30	25	25	0
Bottled Water	37	33	33	0
Condoms	9	1	0	1
Dental Hygiene Kit	22	9	9	0
Drug Test Strips	7	1	1	0
Ensure	44	22	18	4
First Aid Kit	26	20	20	0
HIV Self-Test Kits	3	0	0	0
Hygiene Kit	18	16	16	0
Nail Clippers	20	7	7	0
Naloxone Kit (Nasal) Zipper Pouch	5	1	1	0
Period Pack: Sanitary Pads	5	1	1	0
Period Pack: Tampons	6	3	3	0
Pregnancy Test	4	2	2	0
Snack Pack	39	21	21	0
Socks	14	8	8	0
Sunscreen - Adult	18	5	5	0
Sunscreen - Children	9	4	4	0
Totals:	316	179	174	5



Contact Us

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