

October 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 Bug:

Fall Is Immunization Season

With fall here and students back in school, flu season is just around the corner. As we head into the colder months, it is important to take steps to help protect ourselves, our families, and our community from seasonal illnesses.

Starting in October, Aakom-Kiyii Health Services will be offering seasonal flu immunizations to help protect our community and reduce the spread of illness. Flu immunizations will be available on a walk-in basis on October 19 and 20 with more details to come.

Our Community Health Nurses are starting the 2026–2027 school immunization program. Nurses will be visiting Piikani schools to review students' immunization records and provide routine immunizations to students who are due for their vaccines.

Priority immunizations this school year include pre-

school/Grade 1 boosters, Grade 6 immunizations, and Grade 9 immunizations.

Parents and guardians may be contacted if their child is due for an immunization. Consent from a parent or legal guardian is required before immunizations can be given at school. If you are unsure whether your child needs an immunization or if you need to complete a consent form, you can call the Health Centre at 403-965-3809 and speak with a Community Health Nurse.

Students who are 14 years of age or older may consent to their own immunizations if they demonstrate an understanding of the immunizations being offered.

As we head into fall and winter, staying up to date with immunizations is one way we can help protect ourselves, our families, and our community.



Drug and Opioid Awareness

Piikani Nation continues to face serious challenges related to substance use, including the ongoing impacts of opioids and the toxic illegal drug supply. This issue affects individuals, families, children, Elders, and the entire community. Piikani Nation has previously recognized the opioid crisis as a state of emergency and continues to advocate for resources and supports to address the impacts of substance use in our community.

This is not only a drug issue—it is a community health and wellness issue. Addiction can affect anyone, and individuals struggling with substance use deserve compassion, respect, culturally appropriate support, and an opportunity to heal. Stigma can prevent people from asking for help, so it is important that we create an environment where people feel safe reaching out.

We encourage all Piikani community members to: Talk openly with family members and loved ones about the dangers of opioids and other substances. Never assume that an illegal drug is safe or that its contents are known. The illegal drug supply can contain unexpected and highly toxic substances. Learn how to recognize the signs of an overdose and how to respond.

Carry naloxone and encourage family members and friends to learn how to use it.

Seek help early if substance use is becoming difficult to control.

Support individuals in recovery rather than judging or shaming them.

Talk with children and youth about substance use

in an age-appropriate and culturally respectful way. Reach out to Aakom Kiyii Health Services or other local support services when help is needed.

An overdose can happen quickly, and knowing what to do can save a life. Health Canada provides resources on recognizing an overdose, administering naloxone, reducing stigma, and understanding the risks associated with the toxic drug supply.

Our Community Commitment

Piikani people have always understood the importance of community, family, culture, and supporting one another. Addressing the drug crisis requires all of us—families, health services, schools, leadership, community organizations, Elders, youth, and frontline workers—to work together.

Our message is simple:

You are not alone. Help is available. Recovery is possible. Every life matters.

Let us continue to protect our children and youth, support our families, honour those we have lost, and strengthen pathways to healing and wellness for our community.

Piikani Nation stands together to prevent overdose, reduce stigma, promote awareness, and support healing.



Terry Fox Run

Cancer Awareness

On September 18, Aakom-Kiyii Health Services hosted its annual Terry Fox Run to help raise awareness around cancer and honour those in our community who have been affected by it, including those who are currently battling cancer, those who have overcome it, and those we have lost.

The day brought together more than 50 community members who came out to participate and show their support. The event began with an opening prayer from Elder and cancer survivor Joann Yellow Horn, followed by the Piikani Flag Song performed by singers Jaron Weasel Bear and Brian Plain Eagle.

AKHS Cancer Navigator Lani Black Water and Health Promoter Austin Crow Shoe spoke about finding support while dealing with cancer, the importance of timely cancer screenings, and maintaining active and healthy lifestyles. Community members also shared courageous and inspiring stories about their experiences with cancer. An honour song was performed, followed by a moment of silence in memory of those we have lost to cancer.

The event included a 5 km run through the community, with lunch served at the finish line. Shirts for this year's event were also provided to community members, with proceeds going towards supporting the Terry Fox Foundation and its continued work in cancer research.

The Terry Fox Run continues the legacy of Terry Fox, who began his Marathon of Hope in 1980 with the goal of running across Canada and raising money for cancer research. After losing his right leg to bone cancer, Terry ran more than 5,000 kilometres before cancer forced him to stop. His legacy continues today through the annual Terry Fox Run and the ongoing work of the Terry Fox Foundation.



The Cancer Navigator position at Aakom-Kiyii Health Services continues to provide support to community members and families facing a cancer diagnosis. Lani also shared information about the cancer support groups being implemented through the Cancer Navigator position. These groups will provide another opportunity for individuals and families to connect with others who may understand what they are experiencing.

We will continue to share more information as these supports and initiatives grow. We thank everyone who came out to support this year's Terry

Fox Run and show their support for cancer research, the Terry Fox legacy, and those in our community who have been affected by cancer.



Breast Cancer

Awareness Month

As we move into October, we continue to recognize the importance of cancer awareness and prevention. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an international campaign that provides an opportunity to learn more about breast cancer, promote screening, educate people about risk factors, and support those who have been affected by breast cancer.

Breast cancer affects approximately 2.4 million women worldwide, making awareness and early detection an important part of breast health. Breast cancer can affect many people, and knowing what is normal for your body can help you recognize changes that may need to be checked by a health-care provider. Changes such as a new lump or swelling, changes in the size or shape of the breast, changes to the skin or nipple, or unusual discharge are some things to be aware of. Not every change means cancer, but it is important to speak with a health-care provider if you notice something that is new or concerning.

While breast cancer is most common in women, men, transgender, and non-binary people can also develop breast cancer. Everyone is encouraged to learn about their own risk factors and have conversations with their health-care provider about what screening may be recommended for them.

Regular breast cancer screening can help detect breast cancer earlier. Screening generally begins around age 40, or earlier depending on an individual's risk factors and recommendations from their health-care provider. If you have questions about breast cancer screening, your personal risk, or changes you have noticed, speak with your health-care provider about what is right for you.



Breast Cancer Awareness Month also helps raise funds for continued breast cancer research and supports programs and services for people and families affected by a diagnosis. While October puts a special focus on breast cancer awareness, it is important to continue these conversations throughout the year.

Aakom-Kiyii Health Services encourages community members to stay informed, attend recommended screenings, and reach out to their health-care providers with any questions or concerns. Taking care of our health and supporting one another can make a difference for individuals, families, and our community.



Cancer Journey: *Support Services*

If you or a family member is going through a cancer diagnosis, our Cancer Navigator, Lani Black Water, is available to provide support and help connect community members with available re-

sources and services throughout their cancer journey.

Lani can also be contacted by community members who are interested in learning more about the upcoming cancer support groups. These groups are currently being developed and implemented, and more information will be shared as details become available.

If you would like to connect with Lani or have questions about the supports available, please contact the Health Centre at 403-965-3809 and ask to speak with Lani Black Water, Cancer Navigator.





Head Start

Children are back to school and adapting well to the new daily structure.

As summer ends, the Head Start children are smoothly transitioning to their new schedules. Moving from late summer nights to early morning routine can be hard, but kids show great resilience. With consistent bedtime habits and predictable morning steps, children feel safe and ready to learn. Routines help reduce stress, making the first weeks of the school year successful and calm.

Dates to Note:

- October 12 – No School
- October 14 – Parent/Teacher Interviews

What We're Learning

Skills:

- Associating things that belong together
- Developing an awareness of one-to-one correspondence
- Identifying blue as a primary colour
- Observing and learning through the five senses

Concepts:

- Fall is one of the four seasons
- Using our senses to learn about our changing environment
- Getting ready for winter
- Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks
- People go trick-or-treating on Halloween
- Learning about the importance of plants and their sacred nature



Halloween Tips for Healthier Smiles

Halloween Can Be Fun and Tooth-Friendly!

Halloween is a fun time for kids, and while candy can be hard to avoid, a few simple choices can help reduce the risk of cavities and protect your child's teeth.

Candies and Treats to Limit

Sticky and chewy treats, such as gummies, caramels, nougat and dried fruit, can stick to teeth and provide cavity-causing bacteria with a longer source of sugar. Hard candies and lollipops can also expose teeth to sugar for longer periods and may increase the risk of chipped or damaged teeth. Sour candies contain acids that can wear down tooth enamel over time.

Even treats that aren't sweet, such as chips, can contribute to tooth decay because they can become stuck between teeth and break down into sugars.

Choosing Better Treats

Plain chocolate is a good option because it tends to dissolve more quickly and leaves less time for sugar to remain on the teeth. Powdery candies, such as Rockets and Pixy Stix, also dissolve quickly and may leave less residue behind. Sugar-free gum can be another helpful option, as chewing increases saliva flow and helps rinse away food particles and sugar.

Other Tips for Halloween Treats

A few simple habits can make a difference:

- Choose a smaller treat bag to help keep the amount of candy manageable.

- Have candy with meals rather than snacking on it throughout the day. Increased saliva flow during meals can help wash away sugar.
- Consider swapping some treats for small toys, games or a fun activity.
- Encourage children to drink water after eating candy to help rinse their mouths.
- Continue brushing twice a day and flossing daily, especially after Halloween. A themed toothbrush or fun stickers can help make dental care more exciting for kids.

Halloween doesn't have to mean choosing between having fun and taking care of your teeth. By being mindful of how often your child is exposed to sugar and encouraging healthy dental habits, you can help protect their teeth during Halloween and throughout the year.





I brushed my teeth!



Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

 	 	 	 
 	 	 	 
 	 	 	 
 	 	 	 
 	 	 	 
 	 	 	 
 	 	 	 

What's Happening at AKHS

CFL Youth Flag Football

AKHS is excited to partner with the CFL to offer a special flag football opportunity for youth in our community. This is a great chance for youth to get active, try something new, and enjoy some time on the field with others in the community.



The flag football event will take place on October 23 at the Piikani baseball diamonds, located beside the Multipurpose Building. This is a special opportunity for local youth to get involved in an activity through our partnership with the CFL.

More information about registration and the event will be shared as details become available. We encourage families to watch for more information and take advantage of this opportunity when registration opens.

Thursday Workout Sessions

Our weekly workout sessions with a personal trainer are continuing every Thursday. Sessions run from 4:25 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. at the Health Centre and are open to community members looking for an opportunity to stay active and work toward their health and fitness goals.

Whether you are already active or looking for a way to get moving and make exercise part of your

routine, these sessions provide an opportunity to work with a trainer and participate in a supportive group setting. We encourage community members to come out and join us each Thursday.



Supporting Health and Mobility Through Personal Training

AKHS is partnering with the Piikani Disabilities Project to support community members living with disabilities in leading healthier and more active lifestyles. Through this partnership, participants will have access to one-on-one coaching and the AKHS Fitness Centre, with support focused on exercise, healthy living and improving quality of life.

The program is intended to provide individualized support based on each participant's needs and abilities, helping community members build confidence and incorporate more physical activity into their daily lives.

If you or someone you know would like more in-

formation about the mobility and personal training supports available through the Piikani Disabilities Project, please contact the Health Centre at 403-965-3809.

AKHS Job Opportunities

We also continue to have employment opportunities available at Aakom-Kiyii Health Services. If you are looking for an opportunity to work in health care and serve the Piikani community, keep an eye on our job postings for current openings.

Our available positions and application information can be found on the AKHS website. We encourage community members to share job opportunities with family, friends or anyone who may be interested in joining our team.

Now Hiring
**ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT**



Akoka'tssini Mental Wellness Update

Akoka'tssini Mental Wellness continues to offer weekly support groups for community members and their families who may be struggling with alcohol or substance use.

Support groups are held every Thursday at 4:30 p.m. at the Medical Detox. October meetings will take place on October 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29.

These groups are open to anyone in the community, including family members who may be looking for support. The meetings follow a format similar to Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, providing an opportunity for participants to come together, share their experiences and support one another.



National Addictions Awareness Week



As part of National Addictions Awareness Week, Akoka'tssini Mental Wellness will be hosting several events throughout the community in November. The week will include opportunities to gather, learn about available supports and resources, honour members in recovery, and come together as a community.

Monday, November 16 – Buffalo Feast & Honouring Members in Recovery

- 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Multipurpose Building

Join us for a Buffalo Feast and an opportunity to honour community members in recovery. The evening will feature keynote speaker Ashley Calling Bull.

Tuesday, November 17 – Community Open House & Resource Fair

- 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Piikani Community Hall

Come learn more about the programs, services and resources available to community members. The Community Open House and Resource Fair will provide an opportunity to connect with local organizations and supports.

Thursday, November 19 – Day of Prayer

- 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- Piikani Community Hall

The week will conclude with a Day of Prayer, bringing community members together in reflection, support and connection.

More information about National Addictions Awareness Week activities will be shared as we get closer to the events. Community members and families are encouraged to take part and learn more about the supports available in our community.





Contact Us

-  403-965-3809
-  aakomkiyiihealthservices.com
-  Piikanihealth
-  Aakom-Kiyii Health Services