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WCHS Completes Public Health Accreditation Visits

Winnebago, NE – The Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System is celebrating a milestone this month – they have completed all necessary visits to potentially receive their Public Health Accreditation. The Public Health Accreditation Advisory Board has recognized health departments that meet national standards since 2011, ensuring they provide essential public health services in their communities.

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of communities through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention. While hospitals serve the individual patient, public health serves the community. This is what makes WCHS so unique, it serves all aspects of the patient community. The Winnebago Public Health Department is seeking accreditation to help stimulate quality improvement, improve accountability and transparency, improve the capacity of the department to provide high quality programs and services, strengthen the relationships with key partners in other sectors, help them use equity as a lens for identifying and addressing health priorities, increase the extent to which the health department uses evidence-based practices, and strengthen the utilization of resources.

“We differ from a lot of other public health departments in a lot of ways,” remarks Chief Public Health Officer Mona Zuffante. “We can focus our resources solely on the needs of our Winnebago community. That could be implementing strategies that would be unique to our community, by incorporating our Indigenous culture into our programming. We are in a unique position to elevate the health of our relatives and receiving public health accreditation will only lift us up more. This journey has allowed the department to identify a clear plan for our community’s health, to execute that plan, and then to have it validated by the PHAB is a huge step forward for our organization.”

WCHS submitted over 330 documents to be reviewed by the PHAB, encapsulating some WPHD’s initiatives to elevate the health of the community. 105 of these measures were reopened for the virtual site visit, and only 21 still needed additional information. These documents are audited and vetted by the PHAB, to ensure their legitimacy, accuracy, and strategic execution. The process for accreditation is lengthy and thorough. WCHS is now patiently awaiting the results of these visits.

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The Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System (WCHS) is dedicated to creating and sustaining a healthy community in Winnebago and all the populations we serve. Our organization provides an integrated approach to medicine by offering care services that are compassionate, innovative, and culturally-centered. Our goal is to lead the nation in health for indigenous people by challenging the culture of healthcare for the 10,000 Native Americans who live on the Winnebago Reservation and in the surrounding region. The rural healthcare services we provide include renowned acute care hospital services, a robust primary care clinic, and impressive prevention programs designed to educate, encourage, and support the mental, environmental, social, and physical wellness needs of the Winnebago community. Visit www.wchs.health to learn more.

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