

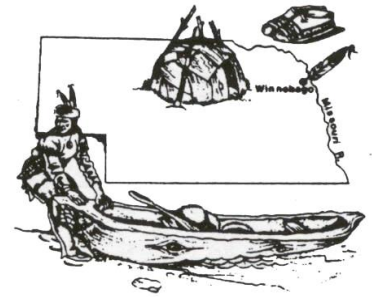
WINNEBAGO TRIBE OF NEBRASKA

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Winnebago Tribe has named the first executives for its newly established Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System (WCHS)

Winnebago, Nebraska - Danelle Smith, a Winnebago Tribal Member, who has served for 14 years as the tribe's general legal counsel, will oversee the WCHS as the Executive Director. For the past 2 and a half years, Smith served on the tribe's Self-governance Steering Committee, which has carried out planning and implementation of the tribe's assumption of the Indian Health Service hospital on its reservation.

Smith said "This is a major step for the Winnebago Tribe and I am honored to be a part of it. We are focused on creating a high quality healthcare system that truly meets the needs of our community. I look forward to the many opportunities ahead."

The tribe has also hired Gary Wabaunsee, an enrolled member of the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma, as the hospital administrator for the WCHS. Wabaunsee has almost 40 years of experience in health care management, having retired from the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps at the rank of captain in 1995.

Winnebago Tribal Council member, Victoria Kitcheyan said "Winnebago Tribe's diligence to improving patient care is on track as we welcome aboard the WCHS executive leadership. Ms. Smith and Mr. Wabaunsee bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that will serve the Winnebago tribal hospital well."

The tribe is employing the Indian Self-determination and Education Assistance Act to assume operation of the hospital, which has struggled in recent years under the federal government's management.

The Winnebago Tribe started the self-governance planning process in 2015 to assume operation of the federally operated hospital, after the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services terminated its certification of the hospital due to deficiencies in patient care. The Tribe is currently in negotiations with the Indian Health Service to enter into agreements necessary for the planned July 1st assumption date.

Smith has served in a broad range of positions, including as a former partner with Fredericks Peebles & Morgan LLP, a law firm dedicated to the representation of American Indian tribes and organizations throughout the country. She worked on the administrative team for nine years for the Winnebago Tribe's college, first at the Nebraska Indian Community College and later at Little Priest Tribal College, when it was originally chartered by the Tribe in 1996.

Smith, also has served on the governing boards for a variety of organizations, including the Ho-Chunk Community Development Corporation, Nebraska Justice Center, Legal Aid of Nebraska and Ho-Chunk Community Development Fund. She is the chairperson of the Indian Law Section of the Nebraska State Bar Association and occasionally teaches business and legal classes at Little Priest Tribal College.

She has served as a member of the Nebraska State Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Project Committee and served a four-year term on the Thurston County Board of Supervisors. She is a recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Alumni Award from the Wayne State College School of Business and Technology.

Smith earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Wayne State College and a law degree from the University of Iowa.

Wabaunsee has served as health director for federal Tribal Health Programs operated under the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act. In addition, he served as CEO at several Indian Health Service locations, including the Schurz Service Unit, Sisseton Service Unit, Fort Yuma Service Unit, Red Lake Service Unit and Crow Service Unit.

He said he is excited to work with Winnebago tribal leaders and tribal health programs and hospital staff. He said his goal is to "provide quality health care service in a compassionate, caring and culturally relevant environment with the focus first and foremost on patient satisfaction".

He earned a bachelor's degree from Northeastern Oklahoma State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and a Master of Public Health in health administration and planning from the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma.

He is from Marana, Arizona, and is married to Deardi Wabaunsee, a retired registered nurse and quality manager. They have two children and five grandchildren.

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