

Prevention is key to keeping people healthy



**CATHY ABRAMSON,
DIRECTOR, UNIT I**

By the time you get this report, Christmas Day will have come and maybe passed. I hope that you all enjoy your families and friends during this season. Already the winter is long and it seems that we lose many of our

people during this time. Please keep them in mind and reach out to them during this sorrowful time that holidays may bring.

I hope to see many of you at the New Years Eve Powwow. Always a great time to visit and enjoy the company of family and friends – AND DANCE!

I'm very excited that our Health Division will be getting more involved at the Chi Mukwa Recreation Center by creating healthful programs for our members young and old. The Health Program will once again take charge of the Fitness Center. We will be able to purchase some new and much needed exercise equipment and hire professional staff who will develop programs designed to meet the traditional and cultural needs of our community. Our tribe as well as all tribes across the nation, have lost

so many of our young people to suicide, drugs and alcohol. Prevention is key to keeping our people healthy in mind, body and spirit. This type of service will also be provided in the other service areas.

It is my hope that our board works with our Health Division to help provide improved access to healthcare by developing and approving another recruitment and retention plan for our health professionals. We do have an Ad Hoc committee. I hope our new year will be met with staff and board members working together positively to improve our healthcare delivery system.

The first week of December was quite an exciting and busy time for me. I was honored to be able to join Chairperson Payment at the Tribal Nations Conference meeting with President Obama.

The reason I was able to attend is that I am a primary member of Secretary Burwell's (Health and Human Services) Tribal Advisory Committee. All 12 primary representatives of this committee were invited. A couple years back, I introduced our chairperson to as many "in the know" people as I could. It was my hope that he would follow up with these agency heads to share our issues and concerns. He has done an exceptional job at making sure we are heard at a national level. I remain committed to assisting him in any way I can in this area. Developing good working government-to-government relationships is important for our tribe.

I was honored to meet our president. The next two years will be focused on our tribal youth. Many of you know that my first love have been our youth and I

have offered my services in this area. I will always remember my mom, Helen McCoy, and Hessel elder, Francis Smith, tell us how proud they were when we went to President Clinton's inauguration years ago. They both cried to know that our people were represented. I know they and our other ancestors were right there with us. This gives me strength and I never feel alone when I speak up for our people.

Our board is in the process of going over and approving our budget for 2015. I am hoping we provide the necessary salary increases and incentives that our employees deserve.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (906) 322-3823 or email me at cabramson@saulttribe.net. Merry Christmas and remember that Jesus is the reason for the season!