

[View this email in your browser](#)



*The* CENTER *for* NATIVE HEALTH



Website



Instagram



MedCaT



MedCaT

A word from the Executive Director:

December 2023

Siyo Nigada / Hello everyone

We are excited to share the work we have been doing in 2023 with all of you. It has been an amazing year of growth and new relationships. As I look ahead to 2024, I am excited by the opportunity for The Center for Native Health to continue to hone our mission and align our programs with the overarching goal of interrupting health disparities in indigenous communities. Our mission is the reduction of health disparities for Indigenous communities through engagement in the preservation and respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). With your support, I see four important areas that CNH will play a leading role in the coming years: Indigenous birth justice, land equity and wellness, cultural preservation through application, and our continued work to educate and mentor the next generation of American Indian medical professionals.

As a Native led organization we are deeply invested and committed to building

relationships with funders, organizations, universities, and most importantly community members that reflect our cultural values. We are grateful for the partnerships and relationships we have built in 2023 that continue to support and nourish us including First Nations Development Institute, Native Voices Rising, Dogwood Health Trust, Unidxs WNC, the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, WNC Nonprofit Pathways along with our numerous community partners and Higher Education collaborators.

Wado/Sgi/Thank you or all you do to sustain us.

Trey Adcock, PHD  
CWYĀ Dβŀ, Cherokee Nation  
Executive Director



## ***The Center for Native Health***

### **Executive Board:**

Trey Adcock (Cherokee Nation), Executive Director  
Roseanna Belt (EBCI), Executive Board Chair  
Tom Belt (Cherokee Nation), Cultural Advisor  
Onita Bush (EBCI), Executive Board Member  
Turner Goins, Treasurer  
Manuel Hernandez (EBCI), Executive Board Member  
Caleb Hickman (Cherokee Nation), Executive Board Member  
Kristina Hyatt (EBCI), Executive Board Member  
Tashina Kalonaheskie, Executive Board Member  
Tara McCoy (EBCI), Executive Board Member  
Micah Swimmer (EBCI), Executive Board Member  
Blythe Winchester (EBCI), Secretary, Executive Board Member

[Donate to the Center for Native Health](#)

### **Call to Give:**

As 2023 comes to a close we want to bring your attention to the significant discrepancy in philanthropy. According to Native Americans in Philanthropy, from 2002 to 2016, the largest U.S. foundations gave, on average, only 0.4 percent of total annual funding to Native American communities and causes. Across all forms of giving, philanthropy to Native-led organizations receive less than ½ of one percent while making up 2.9% of the U.S. population. Native organizations and tribal nations

play a leading role in supporting Native and non-Native communities, for the benefit of all. Much of this work, however, takes place outside of the view of mainstream philanthropy.

Donating to The Center for Native Health not only supports our mission, but interrupts this discrepancy in giving. Your giving means more!

**VA "TOHI" FUND:**

The Center for Native Health is excited to partner with the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina to create a long-term endowment fund to support our mission and secure our future. VA "TOHI" is a cultural perspective of good health that guides all facets of CNH's work. Please consider giving directly to this fund and supporting the mission of The Center for Native Health.

From the Kituwah (Cherokee) perspective, "...health is more than the absence of disease; it includes a fully confident sense of a smooth life, peaceful existence, unhurried pace, and easy flow of time. The natural state of the world is to be neutral, balanced, with a similarly gently flowing pattern... All aspects—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual—figure into the Cherokee concept of good health." (Lefler, 2009). **This is TOHI.**

[Donate to the Center for Native Health](#)

***Updates from The Center for Native Health:***



- In September, The Center for Native Health's Executive Director, Trey Adcock, completed a certificate program in nonprofit leadership put on by NC Nonprofit Pathways.
- In October, The Center for Native Health's Director of Programming, Madison Leatherwood, gave birth to a beautiful baby boy: Awohali Arthur Leatherwood.

---

### ***Community-Based Partnerships:***

#### **The Center for Native Health receives \$30,000 Stewarding Native Lands Grant**

The Center for Native Health recently received a \$30,000.00 grant from the First Nations Development Institute of Longmont, Colorado. This award will support the efforts of The Center for Native Health's Ṭō ih ya: EBCI Youth River Cane Project. This project seeks to facilitate transfer of cultural knowledge from one generation of EBCI artisans to the next generation and teach EBCI youth about the benefits of river cane. As part of the project EBCI youth will help identify river cane patches for conservation, identify and remove invasive species threatening river cane proliferation and learn from EBCI Elders and artisans about the various uses of river cane. The grant activities also include engaging EBCI youth in the processes of government by having them advocate for land conservation dedicated to river cane sustainability. Project partners include Levi West, Cherokee Youth Council leadership specialist at Ray Kinsland

Leadership Institute; Adam Griffith, EBCI Cooperative Extension; and Desirae Kissell, Conservation outreach coordinator for EBCI Natural Resources.



Johnathon "Dewi" Thompson, Choji Thompson, and Mary Thompson, all members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, gather river cane. (Photo courtesy of Center for Native Health)

### ***Cultural Preservation and Application:***

#### **Updates: Rights & Resources Initiative**

In June, The Center for Native Health (CNH) along with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Department of Natural Resources (EBCI DANR) held a three day summit in Cherokee, NC. Leaders from across Indian Country came to engage in conversations and build alliances around land management, conservation and climate change. As part of the three day experience participants visited several important cultural sites to Kituwah (Cherokee) people including the Cowee mound site pictured below. This gathering was sponsored by the Rights

and Resources Initiative.



### ***Cultural Preservation and Application:***

#### **Updates: Elohi Dinigatiyi (Earth Keepers)**

On Nov. 2nd, 2023 The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians formally recognized the creation of the Elohi Dinigatiyi (Earth Keepers) cultural advisory group. This initiative developed out of collaborative conversations between CNH and EBCI DANR. The 10-members group consists of 7 Elders, fluent speakers and culture keepers along with three academic experts in various areas. Elohi Dinigatiyi (Earth Keepers) will assist and support the work of EBCI DANR in all areas including geographical renamings, identifying culturally relevant plant species, #landback efforts and cultural orientations for regional, state and national agencies. The logo below was designed by EBCI citizen Kevin Tafoya.



---

***Training and Mentorship:***

***Training and Mentorship:***

**Updates: New MedCaT Team Member - Chelsea Rangel**

Chelsea Rangel is a tribal member of the Navajo people from the Four Corners area of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. Chelsea has had the privilege to be a part of many Native American programs geared towards the betterment of young native people, from Preschool/daycare worker, Workforce intake to Social Worker, as well as volunteering for children's programs and drug addiction recovery programs. She has most recently worked with tribal programs aimed at higher education for Native students. She is currently a Student Success Advisor at Western Carolina University in the School of Nursing, and has been with the Center for Native Health since June 2023. She obtained a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Antelope Valley in California, and a degree in Health System's Management from the University of Baltimore in Maryland.



Hi there! My name is Chelsea Rangel and I am excited to be a part of the Center for Native Health. I started working with the Center for Native Health in June 2023 and have been enjoying every moment since. In my time here, I have had the opportunity to work with High School students in the Western North Carolina Area. One of the initiatives that I am most passionate about is the Mentoring Program for MedCaT. In this program, I have had the opportunity to share my knowledge and experience as I develop and direct this new element of the MedCaT program, which has been incredibly rewarding. **I have enjoyed being a part of this program and look forward to seeing our students grow and develop in their educational journey.** Recently, I have also been involved in the Learning Labs for our 6 affiliated schools, Murphy, Andrews, Early College, Cherokee, Swain, and Smokey Mountain. As someone who is passionate about education, I am thrilled to be a part of this program. **It has been amazing to see the positive impact we are having on the next generation of learners.** I am committed to delivering high-quality work and am always looking for ways to improve and learn new things. I am thrilled to be a part of the Center for Native Health and look forward to continuing to contribute to its success.



## ***Training and Mentorship:***

### **Updates: MedCaT Mentorship Program**

In early November WCU hosted the MedCaT Mentors for a Tailgate and Football game. WCU vs ETSU. This month MedCaT Mentors will be paired with Health Career Mentors, college students. Who will develop goals to work on for the program year (November- May) many Medcat students have requested help with the college process and advice for next steps into their desired programs of study. The career fields the students are interested in are Physical Therapy, Nursing, Cardiology/Neurosurgeon, Social Work, OB/Gynecology.



## ***Training and Mentorship:***

### **Updates: MedCaT Learning Labs, Summer Academy**

MedCaT's Learning Labs and Summer Academies were successful again this year, with students coming together to build community and knowledge in the healthcare industry. Take a

look at some of the photo highlights from this year:



---

***Board Member Highlight***



***Board Member Highlight***

**Tara McCoy (Eastern Band Cherokee)**

In this edition of the Center for Native Health's biannual newsletter, we would like to introduce our newest **Executive Board Member Tara McCoy**.

She returned to the Qualla Boundary after completing her education at Guilford College, graduating with a B.S. in Sports Medicine. She has since worked in various programs including Cherokee High School / Coaching, UNITY Treatment Center, Dora Reed Daycare and Women's Health, before moving into a role at Cherokee Choices, a diabetes prevention program. She currently serves as the Right Path Leadership Specialist at the Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute where her role is to help develop selfless leaders deeply rooted in Cherokee culture, identity, and leadership through teaching Cherokee values, culture, history, art, and language.

A member of the Wolf Clan, Tara is a 2011 Right Path Program alumni, a 2011 Remember the Removal Bike Ride Legacy Rider, founder and supporter of the Cherokee Cancer Support Group, artist member of the Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual, Inc. and promotes Cherokee art by organizing and teaching art shows and classes in her community. She works in pottery, finger weaving, bead-work, and shell carving, having studied the last four years with renowned shell carver, Dan Townsend. She currently lives in the Birdtown Community of Cherokee, NC.

[Donate to the Center for Native Health](#)

You have been sent this biannual newsletter on behalf of The Center for Native Health 501(c)(3). Any and all donations to the Center are tax-deductible.

