

Cherokee Elder Care is a non-profit entity of the Cherokee Nation that is governed by the Cherokee Nation Comprehensive Care Agency board (CNCCA). The CNCCA board was established in January 2004. The agency was created to facilitate various Cherokee Nation health care business initiatives, including joint ventures and other business-related health activities.

Cherokee Elder Care (CEC) opened August 1, 2008 with two enrolled participants. CEC was created to work in conjunction with the community, state and federal government to provide specialized care to the elderly in northeastern Oklahoma. CEC is the first PACE (Program of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly) program in the state of Oklahoma and the first PACE program to be sponsored by a Native American tribe. Additionally, it is one of the first *rural* PACE sites in the nation. PACE is a federal program designed to keep elders living in their homes, connected with their communities. The PACE center combines the services of an adult day health center, primary care office, and rehabilitation facility into a single location. Services include but are not limited to rehabilitation, prescription medication, meals/nutritional counseling, respite services, caregiver training, home health and transportation. Utilizing an inter-disciplinary team (IDT) comprised of physicians, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, therapists, social service workers, dietitians, and transportation specialists, the total needs of the elder can be addressed. This provides an comprehensive continuum of care designed to maintain and ideally to improve the quality of life for our elderly. Inpatient services (temporary nursing home and hospital stays) and dental services are provided through partnerships with other providers.

The program is an option for anyone who is at least 55 years of age, is certified as needing some level of nursing home level care by a Department of Human Services nurse and can live safely in a home environment within the program's service area. Participants in the program do not have to be a Cherokee Nation citizen or Native American to enroll. As an all-inclusive care program, those enrolling in the program must agree for CEC to be their primary medical provider. As such, the center will provide all prescribed medications, therapy, nutrition counseling, home health services, social activities, transportation, laboratory services, social services, medical equipment, hospitalization, nursing care and adult day health care. There is no place in Oklahoma like CEC.

