

# Local/State

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## Indian Clinic Name Change Memorializes Wichita Pair

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Staff Writer

The Wichita Urban Indian Health Center gets a new name today and will open its doors to non-Indians next week.

The center will be renamed the Hunter Health Clinic in honor of prominent Wichita area Indian leaders Jay and Vera Hunter, both now deceased, in a special dedication ceremony today.

And on Wednesday the health clinic, at 2318 E. Central, will open its doors to the non-Indian working poor in Sedgwick County. Until now, the 5-year-old clinic had limited its patients to Indians.

"We are taking the lead as a private, non-profit Indian Medical Corporation, branching out to help those who are verifiably medically underserved," said clinic executive director Bert Steeves. "We are targeting the working person who falls between the cracks of medical care and coverage."

STEEVES ESTIMATED that 30,000 to 36,000 county residents would now be eligible for care, in addition to the 3,200 Indians already eligible.

Fees will be on a sliding scale, based on verifiable income and family size. Laboratory work,

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pharmacy supplies and medication will not be included.

The clinic already sees between 1,800 and 2,400 patients a year, Steeves said, but is equipped to handle as many as 5,000.

The clinic was incorporated in 1980 to provide health care for urban Indians in Sedgwick County. It is one of 37 urban Indian health clinics around the country set up to help Indians who don't live on reservations.

Its annual budget has ranged from \$236,000 to \$420,000, Steeves said, with funds coming from federal, state and private sources.

THE INDIAN Health Care Improvement Act provides money only for Indian patients. Money to treat non-Indian patients will come from private sources, Steeves said.

Indians receive help in five clinic areas: medical, dental, mental

health, nutrition and outreach programs and in transportation. For now, though, only the medical services will be available to the non-Indian clients. Non-Indians will not have access to the other four clinic areas.

"We're starting conservatively," Steeves said. "Down the road, we will expand the rest of the clinic services (to non-Indians)."

The clinic's new name is a tribute to Jay and Vera Hunter.

JAY HUNTER, who died in 1981, served as executive director of the Mid-America All-Indian Center from 1971 to 1979. A teacher for 16 years, Hunter also was a long-time member of the board of directors of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

Vera Hunter was Indian student advisor for the Wichita Public Schools from 1974 until her death in 1984. She also was a teacher, and worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Institute of Logopedics.

The Hunters, Steeves said, "bridged many gaps between Indians and non-Indians. This will carry on their spirit and name."