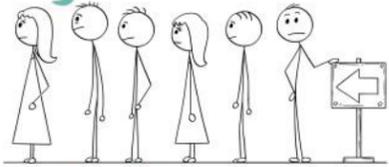


**After Hours**   
**Dental Hotline**

For after hours dental emergencies, please call the Advantage Dental 24/7 hotline at:

**866-268-9631**

**Why wait in line?**



**Fast, friendly pharmacy service by mail!**

- American Indian/Alaska Native patients with Medicaid (OHP) Open Card.
- We also offer primary medical, dental and behavioral health care.
- In-person prescription pickup is available in Coos Bay.

Call to sign up  
**541-435-7039**



**Ko-Kwel**  
 Wellness Center

**Ko-Kwel**

Wellness  
 Quarterly  
 Winter 2023



Ko-Kwel Wellness Center  
 630 Miluk Drive  
 Coos Bay, OR 97420

**Love for Tribal Family** *(continued)*

“Nobody wants to go to rural places,” Shoffner said, even though the need is great for health services.

So why did she choose the KWC?

“We really care about our patients. The entire staff cares,” Shoffner said.

Jones understands the sentiment too.

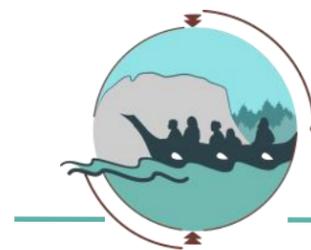
“It makes my heart feel so big because this is where I grew up. These are my cousins, people I see every week and people that know my chil-

dren or my family members,” she said.

Mecum agreed.

When asked the same question, he answers sincerely, “I love working for my Tribal family.”

**PHOTO (right)-Coquille Tribal member Mariah Shoffner is a Pharmacist at the KWC-Coos Bay. She chose the wellness center because the entire staff care about the patients.**



**Ko-Kwel**

Wellness  
 Quarterly  
 Winter 2023

**Love for Tribal Family Inspires Members to Join Wellness Center Team**

It used to be a rare thing.

It still is in Indian Country. But the Coquille Indian Tribe keeps quietly defying the odds and creating its own blueprint of what’s normal. Our Tribe’s new normal includes a wellness center with Native American health professionals.

In the dental field, “Only about one percent of Native Americans have someone from their tribal community working on them in the dentist’s chair,” Dental Health Aid Therapist (DHAT) and Coquille Tribal member Jason Mecum said.

Walk into the Ko-Kwel Wellness Center’s (KWC) Dental Clinic and you might be greeted by Mecum or his Tribal cousin, Dental Assistant Alexandria Jones, who is working on getting her DHAT license in Oregon.

Pain brought Jones into dentistry.

“Growing up on the reservation, we never had the opportunity to be seen at a tribal clinic other than for medical and I went through a lot of dental work that was extremely painful. I never wanted my kids to experience that trauma which is why I got into dental,” Jones said.

From an early age, Jones was taught by her grandfather, Calvin Summers, that it was her responsibility to give back and work for the Tribe. When she got the chance to be trained as DHAT in Alaska, she took it.



**Coquille Tribal member Alexandria Jones credits her sense of Tribal responsibility to her grandfather. Jones is a Dental Assistant at KWC-Coos Bay Dental Clinic and is working towards her Dental Health Aid Therapy (DHAT) license.**

“Going to school in Alaska and knowing I would work for our people made my grandpa proud of me, but it is also very self-fulfilling to know I have the privilege to make an impact in my very own Tribal members lives,” Jones said.

She credits the example of strong Coquille women for her success.

“I was surrounded by strong women within our Tribe that had a large impact on my upbringing. When you idolize those types of women it makes you want to be just as successful,” Jones said.

She’s not the only successful Coquille woman in the KWC. Tribal

member Mariah Shoffner became a Doctor of Pharmacy in August 2023 and works in the KWC Pharmacy.

“I really like having the time to talk with patients,” Shoffner said of her KWC experience. “In retail pharmacy, or community pharmacy, you have to work quickly. Here, you have time to sit down in the consulting room and talk to somebody or call them and let them know their prescription is ready.”

Shoffner was one of the few students from her graduating class who chose a rural location to live and work in.

*(Continued on back)*

## Heart Health Month

February is Heart Health Month and it's a great time to commit to a healthier lifestyle. Health indicators such as Blood Pressure and Cholesterol provide a place to start.

Make an appointment with your provider for a quick check.



## Community Services Adds Additional Programs and Staff



The Community Services Department welcomes Kitina Larsen (left) as the new Healthy Families Coordinator and Kelsey Taylor as the new Care Coordinator at KWC-Coos Bay.

Kitina will be focused on assisting families to achieve more stability and safety. She is a Qualified Mental Health Associate (QMHA) and a capable collaborator who finds working with families a source of positivity. Kitina said she was born and raised in Myrtle Point and adds that she is an "Oregonian through and through".

Kitina can be reached at 541-888-9494, ext. 2212 or by email at [kitalarsen@coquilletribe.org](mailto:kitalarsen@coquilletribe.org).

Kelsey will be focused on case management for those with behavioral health needs. She will advocate for clients who may need access to substance abuse services, housing, food, clothing, transportation, and life skills training. Kelsey enjoys hunting, smoking fish, swimming in the river, and being outdoors.

Kelsey can be reached at 541-888-9494, ext. 2216 or emailing [kelsey.taylor@coquilletribe.org](mailto:kelsey.taylor@coquilletribe.org).

## Sports Gear For Your Mouth



Students are knee deep into soccer, basketball, and other winter sports. Once again, parents are tasked with finding good fitting shoes and various uniform essentials so their kids can safely enjoy playing their favorite game.

One piece of gear that the KWC Dental Clinic encourages all young athletes to wear is a good-fitting mouth guard. Mouth guards not only help reduce the chance of chipped or broken teeth, but they also protect the gums and jaw.

The KWC Dental Clinic offers individually fitted mouth guards free to their established patients. Dental staff will take an impression of your child's mouth in about 20 minutes. The impressions are used to create a customized mouth guard which is usually ready for pick up by the following day. The end result is customized and comfortable mouth guard for your young sports star.

For an appointment, call the KWC Dental Clinic at 541-888-9494, choose option 6.

## COVID-19 Vaccinations on Fridays

COVID-19 vaccines are now available at the Ko-Kwel Wellness Center (KWC) in Coos Bay for Tribal members, CIT employees, Kilkich residents, and KWC patients. The vaccine brand is Spikevax which is manufactured by Moderna. Vaccinations are scheduled on Fridays, and patients can reserve their time slot by calling the Medical Clinic at 541-888-9494, opt. 1.

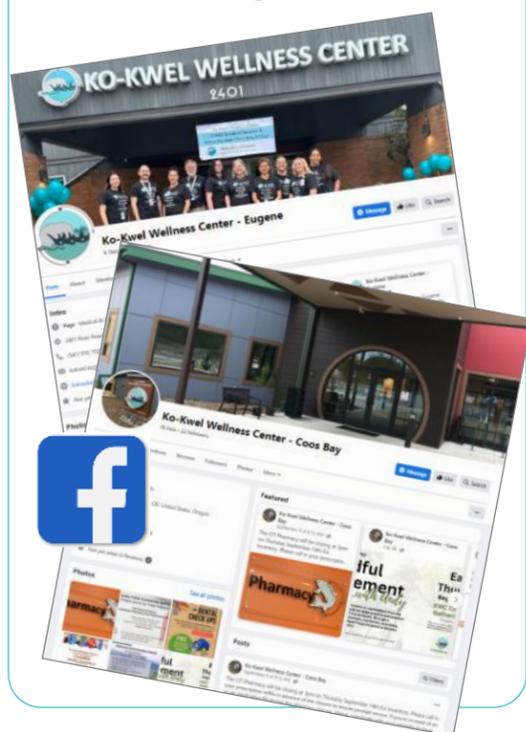


## Guess Who's On Facebook?

Our patients and clients can keep up with announcements, activities, and health reminders for both KWC locations on Facebook.

Find us and follow at:

Ko-Kwel Wellness Center  
Coos Bay  
Ko-Kwel Wellness Center  
Eugene



## Dietitian Values Native Foods in Nutrition Management

Being a dietitian and diabetes educator, it has become my mission to take the shame, blame, and stigma out of diabetes. I am passionate about empowering people to live healthy and happy lives. I also provide nutrition counseling in many areas including weight management and other health conditions.

As a member of the Siletz tribe, I have always had a deep connection with culture. Food is such an important part of culture, and I am an advocate for promoting local, native foods because native foods are

healthy foods!

I am truly honored to be part of this community and am looking forward to learning and sharing stories. I will be offering appointments at both KWC locations. I can connect with patients in-person and through telehealth appointments. Group classes are also in development.

I am kind and nurturing, taking the approach of encouraging small steps towards lifestyle changes. Please contact your KWC provider for a referral.



Dietitian and diabetes educator Rayshal Spalding, RDN, is serving patients at both KWC locations.