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### WCHS Offers Eye Care Screening

Winnebago, NE –Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System is proud to announce our Joslin Vision Network (JVN) screening services in partnership with Phoenix Indian Medical Center Ophthalmology. JVN is an innovative retinal imaging device designed to detect these vision problems early on.

Diabetes occurs when the body’s pancreas cannot make enough insulin or doesn’t use it as well as it should. Insulin helps the body convert sugar into energy. When a diabetic person consumes sugars and this process is not functioning correctly it causes too much blood sugar to stay in the bloodstream. When mismanaged over time, diabetes causes damage to blood vessels in the heart, eyes, kidneys, and nerves that can lead to serious health problems leading to everything from stroke, amputation, and kidney failure, to permanent vision loss or blindness. This makes regular retinal imaging and monitoring of vision changes even more critical for diabetes and prediabetes patients.

“We are always looking to find new innovative ways to help support and find early interventions for our relatives. This JVN machine allows our staff to take a look into our relative's eyes and it could be said that this is a window into what could be happening in their kidneys. This will allow us to help our relatives sooner and that is what we are all about; prevention and intervention.” says Dr. Mona Zuffante, Chief Public Health Officer.

WCHS sought out solutions to providing additional retina screening services that could be available Monday-Friday 8:00 – 4:30 PM and help increase access to care in our community. By using this new JVN specialized camera in collaboration with Optometrists at Phoenix Indian Medical Center Ophthalmology, we are able to better support members of our Wa I pi nagu (path to good blood) program. When patients come to WCHS for their appointment, our trained technician will guide them through the process of getting a photo of their retina, attaching it to their electronic health record to transmit it to Phoenix Indian Medical Center, and then working to communicate with the provider results, send patient letters, and schedule/coordinate any recommended follow-up appointments.

“The process is simple, easy, and painless. We have already offered 50 screenings and we are not stopping there.” Wa I pi nagu program nurse, Michele Smith, “The Indigenous people we serve are at the heart of everything that our team does. At the end of the day, it is always about what is best for our people and how can we elevate our programs in order to meet the needs.”

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*The Winnebago Comprehensive Healthcare System (WCHS) is dedicated to creating and sustaining a healthy community in Winnebago and all the populations we serve. Our organization provides an integrated approach to medicine by offering care services that are compassionate, innovative, and*



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*culturally-centered. Our goal is to lead the nation in health for indigenous people by challenging the culture of healthcare for the 10,000 Native Americans who live on the Winnebago Reservation and in the surrounding region. The rural healthcare services we provide include renowned acute care hospital services, a robust primary care clinic, and impressive prevention programs designed to educate, encourage, and support the mental, environmental, social, and physical wellness needs of the Winnebago community. Visit [www.wchs.health](http://www.wchs.health) to learn more.*

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