

WALTHILL  NEBRASKA

THE PHYSICIAN CAMPAIGN

To Honor a True Nebraska Hero - Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte
Our Country's First Native American Physician



Help us restore her
historic hospital.



DONATE TODAY at nebmed.org/drSusan

Supported by:



HEALER, TRAILBLAZER, WARRIOR

One woman was all these and more to her Omaha Tribe and the community of Walthill, Nebraska.

In 1865, before Nebraska was a state, Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte was born in a teepee on the western edge of the Omaha reservation. Daughter to Joseph La Flesche, Chief Iron Eye, she knew the poor living conditions of her people, the near impossibility of accessing adequate medical care, and the serious effects it had on their health. While still a child, she witnessed the death of a local elderly woman after the local doctor refused to visit because “it was only an Indian.” The incident would change her life.

Against all odds, Susan La Flesche Picotte, MD, became the first Native American physician, graduating as valedictorian from the Women’s Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1889. Fulfilling her promise to return to the Omaha Reservation, she established a medical practice – treating over 1,240 patients and traveling over 1,350 miles of open prairie, to make house calls by horse and buggy. Her efforts significantly reduced the mortality rates of the Omaha Tribe – raising awareness of proper hygiene and food sanitation; treating tuberculosis, smallpox, measles, and influenza; banning communal drinking cups; and installing screens to keep out disease-carrying flies.

In addition to being a trailblazing physician, she was a cultural mediator, church leader, and a tireless advocate for women’s and native American rights. Despite not being considered a citizen of the United States, Dr. Susan was a hero, healer and warrior for her community.



Dr. Susan raised more than \$9,000 to build and equip her original hospital.

Help us restore it at: nebmed.org/drsusan



A HOSPITAL OF HOPE

In 1913, the physician affectionately known as Dr. Susan fulfilled her life-long dream to build a local hospital – eliminating the arduous journey patients endured to Omaha or Sioux City for care. Located in Walthill, Nebraska, it was the first hospital built on a reservation without federal funding. It had a 12-bed general ward, five private wards, maternity ward, and an operating room.

Today, this historic building is at risk of being lost after years of neglect. As Nebraska physicians, we are called to help restore the original hospital into a community center – fulfilling Dr. Susan’s trailblazing legacy of bringing hope and health to the Omaha tribe and surrounding community.

RESTORE THE HOSPITAL AND HER MISSION

In 2017, the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs formed a Susan La Flesche Memorial Hospital Advisory Committee. It was comprised of Dr. Picotte's descendants, community leaders, architects, museum professionals, other stakeholders, and subsequently, the Omaha Tribe and tribal elders. The goal of this group is to restore the original hospital building to better suit the needs of today's local community through:

- Medical, Behavioral Health and Substance Misuse Services
- Youth Programming
- Native Arts and Culture
- Dr. Susan Historical Exhibit

MOVING FORWARD

Work is underway.

A grant from the USDA Rural Development program provided the necessary funding for a detailed, three-phase master plan, which was developed by Nebraska firm, BVH Architecture.

- Phase I - COMPLETE

The first phase is complete – with a new roof installed in 2019 using a grant from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community

- Phase II - COMPLETE

The complete restoration of the exterior, foundation and windows was completed in early 2021 using a USDA grant for \$600,000 and private contributions.

- Phase III - WE NEED YOUR HELP

Help us complete restoration of the interior, along with displays, exhibits and furnishings. **\$2,553,000 remains.**



Susan LaFlesche Picotte attended the Women's Medical College from Dec 1888 to March 14, 1890, when she received her degree. Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, 1864-1922. Photo by [unreadable]

“

My office hours
are any and all
hours of the
day and night.

– Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte,
first Native American physician

Help preserve our Nebraska
medical history at:
nebmed.org/drsusan

Named one of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2018, the Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte Memorial Hospital needs you.

JOIN OUR PHYSICIAN-LED CAMPAIGN

The need for medical care in underserved communities is no less important today than it was when Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte made it her mission to build a hospital in 1913.

Physicians, help us preserve Nebraska history when you support the Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte Center.



Dr. Susan is one of us - she is one of the most famous Nebraska physicians ever. Our medical profession has the responsibility to honor and support this project that is the one thing that provides physical evidence of her life, service, sacrifice and practice.

- Britt Thedinger, MD
Omaha, Nebraska

Keep this as a record of your donation

Everything you need to make your gift to preserve this incredible legacy to medicine and Dr. Picotte is right here.

GIVE ONLINE:

Via our secure website: nebmed.org/drsusan
or scan this QR code to make your donation



MAIL YOUR CHECK:

Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte Center Restoration Fund
Nebraska Medical Association Foundation
1045 Lincoln Mall, Suite 200 • Lincoln, NE 68508



Donation to the Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte Center Restoration Fund

Date: _____ Amount: _____ Paid: _____ Online: ___ By Mail: ___

The Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization