

Kristi Case
Project Manager, Transition to the New Tsali Care Center
Hayes Award Nominee

Kristi Case has played a vital role in one of the most significant initiatives undertaken by the Cherokee Indian Hospital Authority (CIHA) in recent years: the transition to the new Tsali Care Center. As Project Manager, Kristi led this complex, high-impact project with precision, compassion, and a relentless focus on collaboration and outcomes.

Charged with overseeing every aspect of the transition, Kristi coordinated efforts across multiple CIHA departments—Dietary, Maintenance, Public Relations, Operations—and aligned them with external partners and stakeholders. Her ability to build consensus and maintain momentum across diverse teams resulted in a smooth, on-schedule transition, ensuring continuity of care and minimizing disruption for residents and staff.

Kristi brought a data-informed approach to every stage of the project. From early planning through final implementation, she maintained detailed timelines, benchmarks, and key performance indicators (KPIs), holding the project to high standards of safety, quality, and accountability. Regular progress reviews allowed her to anticipate and mitigate challenges in real time—an effort that contributed directly to the project’s timely and successful completion.

Her leadership was not only operational, it was deeply strategic. The transition to the new Tsali Care Center aligned directly with CIHA’s broader priorities of enhancing long-term care services, improving patient safety, and advancing healthcare equity for enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. By helping to establish a state-of-the-art facility with more efficient systems and elevated standards of care, Kristi’s work made a lasting contribution to the quality of healthcare in the region.

The improvements Kristi championed—such as eliminating redundant processes, standardizing protocols across departments, and introducing more efficient workflows—have translated into sustained, measurable improvements in both patient and staff outcomes. Today, Tsali Care Center operates on a solid foundation of well-designed systems and cross-functional coordination that reflect Kristi’s efforts.

Perhaps most importantly, the true measure of her success is found in the voices of residents, families, and staff. The new facility has brought enhanced comfort, safety, and dignity to those it serves. Staff report higher job satisfaction, improved workflows, and more time available for direct care—qualitative outcomes that speak volumes about the impact of Kristi’s work.

Kristi Case embodies the spirit of CIHA’s mission and values. Her leadership, strategic insight, and commitment to excellence have helped elevate the standard of care for our community—and her work will continue to shape Tsali Care’s success for years to come.