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BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER CELEBRATES NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK

Hendersonville, NC, August 5, 2009 – Blue Ridge Community Health Services (BRCHS) will be participating in National Health Center Week August 9-15, 2009 in an effort to raise awareness about the critical role health centers throughout our country play in the lives of those seeking quality health care.

Throughout North Carolina there are an estimated 1.75 million people without health insurance, which translates to many thousands without reliable access to primary care, medical, and dental services. Studies show that patients at health centers are healthier and have fewer hospitalizations and visits to the emergency room thanks to the benefits of affordable preventive medicine.

“Since 1964, Blue Ridge Community Health Services has provided quality health care throughout Henderson County to low income and uninsured citizens, as well as others seeking assistance,” said Jennifer Henderson, CEO of Blue Ridge Community Health Center. “Each year, between our medical, dental, behavioral, and school health services, we are providing nearly 50,000 encounters to about 14,000 of our neighbors and fellow community members. Our staff is dedicated to giving our patients a medical home and the service, respect, and professionalism they deserve.”

According to Milton Butterworth, Director of Development and Community Outreach at BRCHS, “during National Health Center Week, we will be showcasing our ability to deliver health care beyond our doors, as well as our determination to expand health care access by collaborating with other agencies.”

Throughout the week, BRCHS will be offering programs and health care screenings with several of their community partners including the Boys and Girls Club of Hendersonville on Tuesday, August 11. In support of Health Care for the Homeless Day on Wednesday, August 12, BRCHS has joined forces with Hendersonville Rescue Mission to offer onsite services to their clients. In celebration of Farmworker Health Day, Blue Ridge will provide water and heat stroke prevention education at area fields during the day and visit a farmworker housing location on Thursday evening, August 13th to provide health screenings and education. The week wraps up Friday with a Thank You Picnic for staff, board, volunteers, family, and friends to recognize those who have made critical contributions to Community and Migrant Health in this year.

“While celebrating the quality and scope of our health services this week, we are also keeping an eye on the future,” said Steve Kirkland, Chief Development Officer at BRCHS. “Due to health and safety concerns, we have had to abandon our main medical facility which is a 60 year old farmhouse at U.S 64 and Howard Gap Road. Plans are in the works for a new two-story 27,000 square-foot building on the same site that will house both our Family Practice and Pediatric services. Local and federal support will be essential to the success of this capital project,” added Kirkland

Blue Ridge Community Health Services has been serving Hendersonville and the surrounding communities for more than 40 years; providing high quality, affordable medical and dental care, increasing access to health care for all, with special emphasis on the underserved and the uninsured. BRCHS health centers include the William F. Stokes Jr. Dental Center, the Kate B. Reynolds Children's Center, Blue Ridge Family Practice, and school-based health centers at Apple Valley Middle School, North Henderson High School, and Bruce Drysdale Elementary School. BRCHS is accredited by the Joint Commission.

If you would like more information or have questions or comments, contact Blue Ridge Community Health Services at P. O. Box 5151, Hendersonville, NC 28793, call 692-4289 ext 2509 or visit us at www.brchs.com online.

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