

NEWS RELEASE:

For more information, contact:
Jennifer Henderson, CEO (828-233-2207)
jhender@brchs.com



Blue Ridge Community Health Services Unveils New Facility Plans

(Hendersonville, NC) Blue Ridge Community Health Services (BRCHS) unveiled plans today for a new 30,000 square foot facility on their current campus at Highway 64 and Howard Gap Road. The building will house the Kate B. Reynolds Children’s Center, Blue Ridge Family Practice, mental health services, a pharmacy, and a 120-seat community room, as well as space for various medical support services, including radiology and laboratory services, which will be available through a joint venture with Pardee Hospital. Dental services will continue to be provided at the William Stokes Dental Center on the BRCHS campus.

Blue Ridge Family Practice, the anchor site of the BRCHS system, accommodates more than 100 patient visits per day and 25,000 patient visits per year. The core structure of the current facility is a farmhouse that is more than 60 years old. The farmhouse has undergone numerous updates and repairs over the years, including the addition of “trailers” that were attached to the original structure more than 25 years ago. “It was obvious we have done everything we could with the current structure and it was in need of more than just another ‘band-aid.’ said Chief Executive Officer Jennifer Henderson. “The building has served us well over the years, but it is time to move out.”

The new building will allow BRCHS to increase their family practice providers from six to eight immediately, with room for two more should the need continue to grow. Three pediatricians will be on-site, with room for one more additional provider in the future. An

additional 1,500 square feet of “time-share” medical offices will be available for physician specialties that may be interested in leasing cost-effective office space in the Hendersonville area.

In addition to an increase in treatment rooms, the plans also include an enhanced on-site pharmacy that is expected to dispense 30,000 prescriptions per year, three times more volume than is being provided at their current pharmacy at an off-site location.

The new building will be built on the current campus, which means there will be some demolition and construction ongoing for about eighteen months. “We recognize there will be some inconvenience for both our patients and our staff during this time, but we know it will be worth it in the end when our new facility is complete,” said Henderson.

Physicians and patients who have heard about the construction of a new facility are excited about the future of BRCHS. “This organization has always put patients first,” said Dr. Paul Trani, a pediatrician at the Reynolds Children’s Center. “I’m thrilled about the opportunities that lie ahead in the next few years for us to continue to grow and serve our community.”

In order to begin demolition of the family practice building by October, Blue Ridge Family Practice will temporarily relocate to the current Reynolds Children’s Center building. The pediatric practice will temporarily relocate to a medical office building at 1801 Asheville Highway that is currently owned by Blue Ridge Community Health Services Foundation. The Foundation will be donating the use of the building during the temporary move. Both moves will occur prior to August 1.

Henderson and her administrative team created and implemented a plan to relocate the equipment, medical records and staff from the family practice building. “It’s a complicated

move when you consider we are temporarily relocating two different medical practices, but this option means the least disruption to our patients, and providing the highest quality patient care is our priority at all times,” said Henderson. “We are notifying all current patients of the moves by mail and at appointment scheduling, and also erecting signage for new patients who may not be aware of the changes.”

The new facility will cost approximately \$7 million, including equipment and furnishings. “As more and more people are out of work and without health insurance, community health centers continue to see an increase in patient volumes,” said Henderson. “It is vital that we do all we can to meet the growing health care needs of our community.”

BRCHS has been awarded funds through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) Capital Improvement Program to assist with information technology costs only. These funds cannot be used toward the construction of a new facility. “We are excited about the funding we have received for information technology improvements,” added Henderson, “including new practice management software and electronic medical records, which will not only streamline patient care activities, but also support quality initiatives as well. It is our plan to implement this new state-of-the-art technology in conjunction with the construction of a brand new facility.”

BRCHS will be applying for additional grant funds through ARRA to assist with construction costs under the Facility Investment Program, but there is no guarantee those funds will be awarded, and the funds will not cover the total project. BRCHS will also be seeking the support of private foundations and additional grant opportunities, and expects to make an announcement soon about future fundraising efforts to complete the building.

“We’re fortunate to have a hospital of the caliber of Pardee right here in our community, with leaders who recognize the value of community health services,” added Henderson. “We look forward to working with Pardee to provide improved services to both our patients and the community as a whole, right here on our campus.”

Statistics show that the availability of community health services helps decrease patient activity in hospital emergency rooms, which are the most expensive form of health care. “We believe that by working alongside Blue Ridge to provide services that are needed in our community, we are creating a ‘win-win’ situation for both organizations and for our community as a whole,” said Kris Hoce, CEO of Pardee Hospital.

Blue Ridge Community Health Services has been serving Hendersonville and the surrounding communities for more than 45 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. Additional information about the health care services provided by BRCHS is available online at www.brchs.com.

#