

NEWS RELEASE:

December 9, 2008

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“The Nurse Will See You Now...”



(Hendersonville, NC) Students at North Henderson High School have better access to medical care, thanks to a new in-house School-Based Health Center (SBHC) provided by Blue Ridge Community Health Services (BRCHS). The Center, which opened Monday, December 1, will help meet the growing need for students that may not be able to easily access medical care elsewhere, and it is the second facility of its kind in Henderson County.

Last year, the county’s first school-based health center served more than 700 students at Apple Valley Middle School for problems such as headaches, upper respiratory infections, nausea, and other minor illnesses and injuries, as well as mental health and nutrition counseling and basic health education.

Dr. Paul Trani, Medical Director of Blue Ridge Community Health Services’ school-based health centers, said these type programs promote overall health and well-being, which in turn improves overall school attendance and performance. “These centers ensure that students who may not get medical treatment anywhere else will at least get it in school,” said Trani. “I’ve seen instances where we have identified problems such as diabetes and asthma at an early age,

before they become bigger problems later in life. And by treating students where they are, at school, we can help reduce absences due to health-related issues.”

Open House events are planned this month at North Henderson High School for students and their families to see the new facility and meet the staff, which includes a physician assistant, a nurse, a licensed clinical social worker and a nutritionist.

“We are very pleased to have a new school-based health center here in Henderson County,” said Stephen Page, Ed.D., Superintendent of Henderson County Public Schools. “When economic times are tough, it’s good to know that our priorities are where they should be – in serving not only the educational needs of our youth, but the health care needs as well.”

According to the U.S. Census Bureau of 2000 and the American Community Survey of 2005, 22.6% of the children in Henderson County are living below the federal poverty threshold. “Many of these children are uninsured and don’t qualify for Medicaid,” said Jennifer Henderson, CEO of Blue Ridge Community Health Services. “That’s what makes this center even more important in our community, and that’s why we have been able to garner such widespread support for this effort.”

“We were thrilled to receive generous contributions from the Perry N. Rudnick Fund at the Community Foundation of Henderson County and the Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Foundation, Inc. to fund clinical staffing for the health center,” added Henderson. “Additional grant funds from the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina helped purchase start-up supplies, so this center is truly one provided *by* our community, *for* our community.” BRCHS

plans to open two additional school-based health centers in Henderson County over the next two years, she added.

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 and North Henderson High 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.

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PHOTO ATTACHED: Julie Bass-Ransom, PA-C (left), assesses Travis Brown, a student at NHHS. Bass-Ransom is a Physician Assistant at the North Henderson High School Health Center.