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## **Norwalk Public Schools Cuts the Ribbon on New Norwalk Community Health Center's School-Based Health & Wellness Centers**

Norwalk, Conn. (Jan. 23, 2024) -- Norwalk Public Schools and the Norwalk Community Health Center (NCHC) celebrated the opening of their newest school-based health and wellness centers alongside federal, state and local officials as well as school leaders, healthcare workers and students on Monday.

The official ribbon cutting ceremony took place at Ponus Ridge STEAM Academy where one of the two new health centers is opening. The Ponus Ridge location will service students from Ponus and Concord Magnet School. The second location is opening at Brien McMahon High School and will service students at Brien McMahon and the Center for Global Studies.

“As a school system, we’re not only responsible for providing our scholars an education but also providing a well-rounded experience that allows them to not only to get the educational tools that they need but also the social services they need to keep them healthy and well to progress in our educational system and most importantly, keep them on track for their future,” said Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools.

Both entities were proud to welcome Senator Richard Blumenthal; Jonathan Smalls, a proud alumnus of both Ponus Ridge and Brien McMahon, representing Senator Chris Murphy; Congressman Jim Himes; State Senator Bob Duff; and Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling.

A Health Center Program School-Based Service Expansion grant from the U.S. Human Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) was key to NCHC’s ability to open new service sites at the two school campuses. Norwalk Community Health Center and Norwalk Public Schools is indebted to Senator Blumenthal, Senator Murphy, and Congressman Jim Himes for endorsing the grant request that will expand access to medical, behavioral health, and enabling services for students.

“As an organization, we are really committed to this work. The grant is really about focusing not only on primary care but mental health services. We know nationally that 22% of all high school students in the last year seriously considered committing suicide. We know that this program is going to be very effective at preventing that,” said Kenneth Waller, CEO of the Norwalk Community Health Center.

Norwalk Community Health Center’s nationally recognized health center is honored to be partnering with all four schools to provide school-based health and wellness services for their students. NCHC

will work together with families and their family pediatricians to keep Norwalk students healthy and in school. Services provided will range from physicals to immunizations, counseling to crisis intervention, and so much more.

Visit the Norwalk Public Schools website to learn more about the new school-based health centers.  
<https://bit.ly/4av5BXN>

**About Norwalk Public Schools:** At Norwalk Public Schools, our mission is to provide an excellent and equitable education so that all students graduate future-ready as civically responsible, globally engaged and positive contributors to an ever-changing and diverse world. Reflecting our diverse community, NPS families speak 59 different languages and represent 70 different countries.

Serving nearly 12,000 students, Norwalk Public Schools consists of four high schools, four middle schools, 13 elementary schools and one inclusive pre-school. NPS high school programs offer International Baccalaureate diploma and career programs; a renowned global studies magnet school; pathways in healthcare, marine science and digital media; and the opportunity to earn an industry recognized associate's degree along with a high school diploma. PreK through middle school students can take advantage of magnet programs focused on language, character, marine science, college and career readiness, and visual and performing arts. NPS also prides itself on its neighborhood schools, which build community and offer their own unique educational opportunities.

**About Norwalk Community Health Center:** NCHC is a nonprofit healthcare provider that has not stopped growing, since our earliest days in 1999, to meet the expanding and evolving needs of our patients and the community.

As a Federally Qualified Health Center, NCHC provides high quality medical care to anyone who needs our services. Whether you are insured, uninsured or underinsured, on Medicaid or Medicare, find a doctor accepting new Medicare patients and anyone looking for a patient-centered medical home, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, health status, religion, sexual orientation, education or ability to pay.

From our call center to our front desk to our eligibility team to outreach coordinators to our providers and healthcare teams, NCHC associates are as multi-lingual and as diverse as the 14,000 men, women, and children who rely on us to help them get well and stay healthy.

NCHC is recognized as a level 3 Patient Centered Medical Home by the National Committee for Quality Assurance. Level 3 is the highest level a healthcare practice can earn. It puts NCHC among the nation's leaders in providing comprehensive medical care that is customized for you and adjusted over time, as your health needs change. It is a high bar that we strive to live up to every day.

As an early Practice Transformation Network adopter, we are piloting continuum of care programs and team approaches that measure success by healthy patient outcomes over time, not on the number of procedures and tests we can order.

We welcome you to make NCHC your family's medical home.