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CONTACT:

Christina Anthony

Kalamazoo County PIO

cganth@kalcounty.com

(269) 373-5271

Susan Coney

Kalamazoo Public Schools

(269) 337-1572

Loy Norrix High School Granted New Health Center

KALAMAZOO, Mich. – Students at Loy Norrix High School will soon have an opportunity to seek personal and mental health services at a new, school-based health center funded by the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services (MDHHS) Child & Adolescent Health Center Program Implementation (CAHC) Grant Program.

“We are thrilled that Kalamazoo County took the initiative to launch this effort to expand services to young people in the community,” said Kalamazoo Public Schools Interim Superintendent Cindy Green.

The focus of the CAHC grant program is to provide a safe and caring place for children and adolescents to learn positive health behaviors, prevent disease, and receive needed medical care and support—resulting in healthy youth who are ready and able to learn and become educated, productive adults.

“It has been proven across the country that when a school has a successful health center, student attendance and graduation rates increase, students’ mental health improves, and health conditions such as obesity and asthma are reduced,” said Kalamazoo County Health Officer Jim Rutherford. “This partnership between the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department and Kalamazoo Public Schools will provide personal and mental health services for the approximately 1,800 Loy Norrix High school students. We are excited to see the benefits on a local level.”

The grant, which was accepted by the Board of Commissioners at their May 16 meeting, specifically targets adolescents and requires the clinic to serve 500 unique individuals each year, lending itself to one of Kalamazoo Public School’s comprehensive high schools. The clinic staff will include health care providers and a medical social worker.

“Not only will the staff at the clinic be giving direct services to students at no cost to them, but with the social worker, they’ll be able to help students unlock additional resources in the community,” said Loy Norrix Principal Chris Aguinaga.

The Clinical CAHC model provides comprehensive primary care and preventive health services, including well care and diagnosis and treatment for both acute and chronic illness, psychosocial and disease prevention services, Medicaid outreach services, and access to Medicaid preventive services, in a manner and atmosphere friendly to eligible children and adolescents.

“When looking at the issue of health care through an equity lens, the clinic will help put all of our students on an equal playing field in terms of access to high-quality health care — where that might not have always been the case,” Aguinaga said. “We are happy for the collaboration and the chance to remove some of the barriers to health care faced by students.”

School-based health center services have been provided in Michigan through the CAHC program since the 1980s. The CAHC program is jointly managed by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

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