



FOUNDATION
— for —
COMMUNITY
HEALTH

Prevention, Access, Collaboration

478 Cornwall Bridge Road, Sharon, CT 06069

First School-Based Health Center in Mid Hudson Valley

The Foundation for Community Health has awarded a \$100,000 grant to the Webutuck Central School District (WCSD) for construction costs for the first full-service, school-based health center (SBHC) in our community. The aim is to establish the health center for the 2020/21 school year and to make it available to all students.

The SBHC will provide primary care health services, that include physical, mental and dental, to be delivered in school with no out-of-pocket cost. All the services will be available in the school setting with minimal missed educational time and without interrupting the schedules of parents or guardians. This is important in situations where both parents/guardians work, have restricted flexibility in time away from work and/or have transportation challenges.

Research has shown that health is a keystone for both short-term and long-term student success. Poor attendance in kindergarten is associated with poor math and literacy skills in later grades and chronic absence by the 6th grade is a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school. The U.S. law governing K-12 public education policy, the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, states that “Students who have access to regular physical and mental health services have fewer absences, are more social, less likely to participate in risky behaviors and have improved focus and higher test scores.”

SBHCs effectively remove cultural, financial, privacy and transportation related barriers typically experienced at traditional clinics while being linked to a variety of favorable health-related outcomes such as increased use of vaccinations and prevention services, reduced asthma morbidity, fewer emergency department visits and hospital admissions, lower illegal substance use and alcohol consumption and reduced violence.

The Foundation for Community Health is confident that this will be a successful partnership between the Webutuck Central School District and Open Door Family Medical Centers, who will operate the health center. Open Door is a Federally Qualified Health Center with an expertise in full-service, school-based health centers. They have created multiple SBHCs in the lower Hudson Valley region. These health centers have achieved significant reductions in chronic disease events that are responsible for repetitive student absences and emergency room visits.

The program has the support of NYS Assemblymember Didi Barrett, NY State Senator Sue Serino, Congressman Antonio Delgado and Legislator Gregg Pulver.

The Foundation for Community Health is pleased to fund this effort that supports our work to improve the health and well-being of the residents in our communities. For additional information, contact Ray Castellani, WCSD Superintendent at raymond.castellani@webutuck.org or Lindsay Farrell, Open Door President and CEO at lfarrell@odfmc.org