

StamfordPatch

SCHOOLS

New Health Center Breaks Down Barriers for Students in Need

A new school-based health center will serve students at two of Stamford's charter schools.

By **Marion Herbert** 12:11am

Three hundred middle- and high-school students will now have access to immunizations, physical exams, medical assistance and dental care due with the launch of a school-based health center at two Stamford charter schools: [Trailblazers Academy](http://stamford.patch.com/listings/trailblazers-academy) (<http://stamford.patch.com/listings/trailblazers-academy>) and [Stamford Academy](http://stamford.patch.com/listings/stamford-academy) (<http://stamford.patch.com/listings/stamford-academy>).

The health center, operated by Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC), opened on January 10 and is housed at Trailblazers. The health center aims to provide on-site medical services to students and, ultimately, give children more time in the classroom. CHC is a Connecticut-based organization that currently serves over 96,000 patients.

"So many people face barriers to receiving healthcare, including children and adolescents," Jane Hylan, director of school-based health services for the CHC, told Patch.

Trailblazers Academy and Stamford Academy, both public charter schools operated by the non-profit foundation [Domus](http://stamford.patch.com/listings/domus-administrative-offices) (<http://stamford.patch.com/listings/domus-administrative-offices>), attracts students that have struggled to thrive in traditional public schools for different reasons.

"Our schools provide kids who've been unsuccessful in traditional schools a very comprehensive school experience, including individualized attention, rigorous academics and significant family and behavioral support," Domus Executive Director Michael Duggan, said in a statement. "We've long lacked the important on-site health care piece."

According to Hylan, CHC was approached in November 2009 to develop a clinic for the schools. CHC school services are offered in 23 schools around the state, and the clinic at Trailblazers is the first to open in Fairfield County. Having finally opened in January 2011, the health center is now offering part-time medical services, but this demand will most likely grow to full-time between the two academies by the start of the new school year.

The two academies have been operating without a school nurse, but will now have a nurse practitioner that can diagnose, treat, and prescribe for acute illnesses and injuries and provide chronic care management for asthma or diabetes. The services are also provided to all students, including those with no health insurance.

"All students are eligible for services," says Hylan. "There is a nominal fee for the uninsured students who receive dental care and no cost to the uninsured for medical or behavioral health services."

For the uninsured students, Hylan said the health center will work with the family to assess if they are eligible for insurance and assist with the enrollment process. The center's nurse practitioner will also have communication with the student's primary care physician and will assist in locating a primary care physician for students that do not have one.

The main benefit, Duggan said, is for students to have more time in the classroom.

"Students dealing with minor health issues will now be able to stay in the building and return to class quickly, missing less instruction."

"The education around managing asthma or diabetes can be internalized when presented by someone who a student becomes familiar with and who they visit within a safe place," Hylan said. "The benefits just go on and on."

According to Hylan, the future of CHC's health centers is looking good. "As we build relationships the practice will grow," she said. "Students will receive some very basic but essential services that they otherwise would have gone without."



PHOTOS (4)



Interested in a follow-up to this article?



SEE NEXT IN SCHOOLS
[Dramatic Ending for Boys & Girls Club Music Bee](#)