

Care all around: Smalley Academy welcomes CHC family health clinic

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NEW BRITAIN — In a nod to the expanded role many schools are playing in their communities, a health clinic opened Wednesday at Smalley Academy that, in addition to serving students, will provide care for their families and others living in the neighborhood.

The Community Health Center Inc., one of the leading nonprofit health care providers in the state, was instrumental in bringing the clinic to Smalley. The center provides treatment and services for medical and dental care along with behavioral health. While CHC is available to all, it has a particular commitment to the uninsured, underinsured and low-income populations.

This is the third CHC clinic to open in the city, with others at Roosevelt Middle School and New Britain High School.

“As the first elementary school we’ve opened in New Britain, we can now see a group of kids from preschool to high school graduation,” said Jane Hylan, director of school-based health services for CHC.

The clinic at Smalley will have a practitioner nurse who can prescribe medicine, a licensed social worker, a medical assistant, and a dental hygienist. Prior to the clinic’s opening, Smalley was limited to one registered nurse and a mobile dental clinic offered twice a year.

Mario Cruz, principal of Smalley, which is on West Street, said that out of the school’s 700 students, 125 have already registered with the clinic. CHC helps those students without health insurance receive free services and assists them in determining their eligibility for a larger public health insurance program, such as the state-run HUSKY.

“We’re excited to host the school-based health center in our school and we look forward to collaborating closely,” Cruz said.

He said CHC’s primary care offers immunizations, physical examinations, and medical management with “little interruption from the school day.”

The clinic will not only be available for students, but also their families and people living in the Smalley neighborhood.

“We are emphasizing our students’ health needs first,” Cruz said. “Then we hope to greatly extend the clinic’s services to our surrounding community.”

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