

## Fitzgerald Students Benefit From New HFHS Center

Henry Ford Health System last week officially opened its newly renovated school-based health center at Fitzgerald High School in Warren.

The new center offers a more spacious clinic and upgraded medical equipment to better handle the nearly 700 students it treats each year, many of whom have no other source of care.

The renovation was made possible through a \$500,000 grant given to Henry Ford's School-Based and Community Health Program (SBCHP) from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

It is the first-ever source of federal funding to support school-based health centers.

A portion of the grant funding was also utilized to upgrade services and equipment in seven Detroit schools and one Detroit youth center, all with Henry Ford school-based health centers.

In all, Henry Ford's school-based health centers log more than 15,000 visits for children and adolescents in Southeast Michigan each year.

"The HRSA grant has allowed our School-Based and Community Health Program to expand its work and make needed upgrades to our school-based health centers," said Charles Barone, M.D., chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Henry Ford.

"This will ensure healthier futures for the children and youth in our community who might not otherwise have access to care."

Barbara VanSweden, superintendent of Fitzgerald Public Schools, added, "The school-based health center has provided many children and families with access to medical services that may have gone unmet in the community."

"Our district values the partnership with Henry Ford Health System."

"We are very grateful to the Fitzgerald Board of Education that had the vision 25 years ago to recognize the impact of quality health care on student achievement and the willingness of Henry Ford to

support this vision," she said.

Henry Ford Health began management of the school-based center in Fitzgerald High School in 2003. The center had not been renovated since it opened in 1989.

As part of the renovation, Henry Ford Health was able to improve the 1,838-square-foot health center's functionality, privacy and appearance by adding a third exam room and upgrading its two existing exam rooms. Heating and cooling systems were also upgraded.

The renovation, completed this fall, incorporated the use of low VOC-emitting paints and flooring materials, promoting a healthy indoor air quality.

The grant also provided funding to all of Henry Ford's school-based health centers for new medical equipment, including exam tables with stirrups, audiometers and glucose meter/cholesterol machines.

The upgrades provide for more unified equipment and ensure the same level of care is offered across all Henry Ford SBCHP sites.

Older computers at each site were upgraded as well, and new computers were added to each exam room to provide staff greater access to electronic patient records. Patients also may use the new computers to complete online health assessments and view health education material online.

Because of school-based health centers, children in some of the most vulnerable school districts have access to primary and preventive health care, including physical exams, immunizations, dental service, health education, testing and treatment for illnesses or injuries and mental health counseling.

Additionally, students have 23 percent higher standardized test scores, a 70 percent decrease in violence, and a 62 percent decrease in pregnancy after one year than schools without a school-based health center.

The Henry Ford SBCHP model includes a board-certified pediatrician to direct the services.

## GM Chorus to Open Concert Series Nov. 30

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

She, herself, has a master's degree in choral conducting and composition.

"Being choir director entails directing rehearsals and assisting in selecting music," Saari said. "Our accompanist, Eric Miller, helps, too. He is the director of choral activities at Lincoln High School in Warren."

The choir usually has about 50 members and, despite the name, they don't have to be GM employees. "The choir got its start back in the 1930s," Saari said. "In those days, all the big corporations had their own choirs. GM stopped funding in the 1970s, but the choir kept its name. You don't have to work for GM to be a

member and we have people come from as far away as Fenton to sing with us."

The choir will perform a wide variety of music, both sacred and secular, for the upcoming holiday season, Saari said.

Choir members are very loyal. Norma Grijak has been a member for 50 years. Saari calls her the unofficial group historian. But at the same time, there are a small number of members who might only participate for a year or two, so there's a healthy mix of long-time and new members.

"A lot of members have seen directors come and go," Saari said. "But I've been here long enough so that we've all grown together."

"When a new director starts,

there is always a period of everyone getting used to each other. We are not in this for commercial gain. We do it because we love to sing for people who can't make it to Orchestra Hall to hear good music. That's why we visit places like hospitals."

Joel Zwolinski, president of the choir, has been a member for 21 years. He's an automotive safety engineer and was a GM employee until the division he worked for was sold.

"The GM Chorus is like a big family," Zwolinski said. "I myself joined the chorus with my sister who was an EDS employee. She didn't want to go alone so I went with her and ended up staying. I met my now-wife Kim at the chorus. That was 15 years ago."



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