



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Over 100 Youth and Staff from Child and Adolescent Health Centers
Meet with State Legislators
*The Alliance Advocacy Day Promotes Healthy Kids Are Better Learners***

Lansing, Michigan – Today, over 100 youth and staff from child and adolescent health centers (CAHCs) from across the state gathered in Downtown Lansing to promote the concept with policymakers: healthy kids are better learners. The School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan (SCHA-MI) and its membership of CAHCs are critical to supporting student health and education.

SCHA-MI's Advocacy Day 2011 was about educating members of the Legislature about CAHCs, a cost-effective, evidence-based model for health care access for adolescents and others in medically underserved areas in the state while also improving educational outcomes.

"We were excited that so many youth were able to share their stories today about how they have been helped by their child and adolescent health center in or nearby their schools," said SCHA-MI Executive Director Michele Strasz. "The youth voice is very critical for policymakers to hear, especially as they make decisions that affect their health and education, the future of Michigan."

"It is important enough for our new legislators to know how much our CAHC means to the community and the Alcona students we serve," said nurse practitioner Paula Welling from the Alcona Tiger Health Center. "It is important enough that we drove through a snow storm in Northern Michigan to be here!"

Youth and health center staff made over 40 of visits today. The Advocacy Day program also included a legislative luncheon attended by nearly 50 legislators and staff with a presentation made by the Detroit Edison Public School Academy (DEPSA), winners of last month's youth video contest celebrating National School-Based Health Center Month. The school-based health center was awarded an Xbox Kinect for their video. The video is available to view on SCHA-MI's YouTube Channel.

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“Student health centers are the bridge for a better tomorrow,” said DEPSA student Jazzmin Ford. The 14-year old student contributed to the video and was one of more than 10 youth from DEPSA attending Advocacy Day 2011.

Ten-year old Joshua Holcomb, a student from Alcona, shared his experience, “I like the Tiger Health Center more than my doctor’s office! For my asthma, they check my peak flow and make me feel better.” Joshua’s mother, who also attended SCHA-MI’s Advocacy Day 2011, expressed her high confidence in the services her son receives at the school-based health center. She’s thankful for the care Joshua has available all day long.

A CAHC is like a doctor's office in school. They provide students with quality primary and mental health services in a safe, easily accessible location on or near a school campus. Today, there are nearly 70 state funded centers and programs in Michigan serving over 200,000 children of all grade levels in urban, rural, and suburban schools and communities across the state. These centers and programs are strategically located in medically underserved communities where access to health care for youth is an issue.

The School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan (SCHA-MI) is a non-profit organization supporting a network of over 100 school-based and school-linked health centers and health education programs across Michigan. The centers annually provide over 300,000 health encounters/services. The centers are located in communities where the majority of children lack access to consistent, primary health care and as a result are at-risk of chronic health conditions and school failure. Visit our website, www.scha-mi.org.

For more information about Michigan’s school-based and school-linked health programs, please contact Michele Strasz at 517.908.0847, ext. 229 or mstrasz@scha-mi.org or Alicia Guevara at 517.977.3380 (cell) or aguevara@scha-mi.org.

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