

The School Health Alliance For Forsyth County Joins forces with FQHC Gaston Family Health Services

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For immediate release

Contacts: Stephanie Daniel, PhD (336) 716-1839
Robert Spencer (704) 874-1903

Effective February 1, 2017 Gaston Family Health Services Inc.(GFHS), a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) and the School Health Alliance for Forsyth County (SHA) join forces to integrate SHA's clinical service model and GFHS' FQHC operations.

SHA, established in 1999 as a non-profit organization, operates school-based health centers and programs providing medical and behavioral health services to school-aged children and adolescents in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County (WS/FCS) School District. GFHS, an FQHC established in 1992, provides medical, behavioral health and dental services in five NC counties, and has significant experience integrating other community-based clinics into their FQHC model.

SHA's strategic plan has been focused on collaboration with an existing FQHC in order to enhance clinical infrastructure, and in turn, increase access to care for students in Forsyth County. SHA has elected GFHS as the FQHC "of choice" for this collaboration.

The integration will continue to ensure the successful delivery of quality school-based care to the students of the WS/FCS School District, and supports both organizations' intent to expand the school-based practice model in Forsyth county and beyond.

GFHS' administrative and operational support will include patient care, enabling and operational supportive services, electronic health record and patient billing integration.

Through its collaboration with GFHS, SHA will continue to operate with existing staff, providers and leadership at existing sites in the WS/FCS District under the SHA name:

- Mineral Spring Student Health Center, 4555 Ogburn Ave., Winston-Salem NC
- Winston-Salem Prep Academy Wellness Center, and Mental Health Consultation Clinic at WSPA, 1215 N. Cameron Ave., Winston-Salem NC
- Ashley Wellness Center, 647 NE Ashley school circle, Winston-Salem, NC
- School Based Social Work Program, 601 N. Cherry St., Winston-Salem NC
- Mobile Medical Unit, serving designated schools in the W-S/FC School District

"The integration of SHA clinical operations with GFHS will ultimately allow SHA to better serve and meet the comprehensive health and mental health needs of the underserved, disadvantaged and uninsured WS/FCS students in our community through the efficiencies gained by operating under the FQHC model. Both SHA and GFHS have a history of providing best and evidence-

based practices within their respective clinical programs and operations. We are very excited to enter in this relationship and look forward to the long-term viability and success it will mean for SHA.” said SHA’s Executive Director, Stephanie Daniel, PhD.

Robert Spencer, CEO of GFHS, added: *“We are fortunate to have this relationship with SHA and look forward to building on the strengths of our organizations to continue and increase access to care in the WS/FCS District.”*

About SHA and GFHS:

The School Health Alliance for Forsyth County, established in 1999, is a partner and supporting organization to the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County schools. SHA operates school-based health centers and programs to provide medical and mental health services to school aged children and adolescents. For more information visit www.shaforsyth.com

GFHS is a community-sponsored, family-centered provider of healthcare, health education and preventive care services without regard for the ability to pay. Medical and dental services are offered in Catawba, Davidson, Gaston, Iredell and Lincoln counties. Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance and self-pay patients are accepted. For more information about Gaston Family Health Services visit www.gfhs.info