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**Health Department of Northwest Michigan News Release**

### **Health Department celebrated School-Based Health Center Awareness Month**

Students and families across Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet and Otsego counties have better access to health services thanks to school-based health centers operated by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. During February, the staff and services provided by these health centers were celebrated as part of School Based Health Center Awareness Month.

“There have been school-based or school-linked health centers in Michigan for over 30 years,” said Cortney Crocker, a Nurse Practitioner with the Ironmen Health Center, operated in collaboration with Mancelona Public Schools at the Mancelona Family Resource Center.

Currently, there are just over 300 centers and programs in Michigan and over 2,500 nationwide. Michigan is among the top six states that have the largest number of health centers in the U.S.

The health impacts of school-based health centers are profound.

“Students have better access to health services creating healthier students and families,” Crocker said. “Healthy students learn better, the attendance rate in schools increase, there’s reduced emergency room usage, and parents spend more time at work because they are not missing work for doctor’s appointments,” she explained.

The Ironmen Health Center provides acute care visits, preventative health care, screenings, vaccinations, lab work, and mental health and wellness support services. In addition to the Ironman Health Center, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, in cooperation with local public schools operates the Blue Devil Wellness Center in Gaylord, the Hornet Health Center in Pellston, the Ram Wellness Program in Harbor Springs, and the Rambler Wellness Program in Boyne City. While slightly different services are offered at each location, the ultimate goal is the same: enhance the wellness of students and their families and communities.

The Ironmen Health Center recently underwent extensive renovations to enhance the appearance and attractiveness of the facility. The exam rooms have received a fresh coat of paint, new growth mindset posters are located around the center, and creative student artwork lines the halls of the wellness center.

Additionally, the Ironmen Health Center has an ongoing contest to encourage students to get updated on their preventative health care services. Students receive a ticket entry for keeping their

*The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit [nwhealth.org](http://nwhealth.org).*

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appointments, getting a physical, participating in the teen advisory committee, and following the center on Facebook. Prizes include Super Sunday tickets and tubing tickets at Shanty Creek, a gift card to Paddles and Pedals in Bellaire, and a gift card to the Lakes of the North golf course.

Crocker also noted that Nurse Practitioner Tammy Hickman retired this summer after serving 27 years with the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, with the majority of the years spent at the Ironmen Health Clinic.

**CUTLINES:**

Mancelona Public School students Julia Kirby and Emma Moser read in the newly updated waiting room at the Ironmen Health Center. In the second photo, Nurse Practitioner Cortney Crocker checks Adam Ackler's reflexes in one of the freshly painted exam rooms at the Ironmen Health Center. The Health Department of Northwest Michigan celebrated all of its school-based health centers during School Based Health Center Awareness Month in February.

