

**Feb. 22, 2023**



*Chronicles*  
*"Healthcare the Way it Should Be"*

## **School Based Health Centers make differences daily**

When students don't feel well, they don't do well in school. We bring healthcare directly to schools through School Based Health Centers to ensure children are ready to learn.

The program removes barriers to healthcare and helps improve long-term health outcomes, continuity of care, and academic achievement.

The health center was founded on getting kids ready to learn with the earliest staff members providing immunizations on the second floor of the Family Resource Center in Pittsburg. The first districts CHC/SEK nurses were placed in were Pittsburg Community Schools and Coffeyville School District.

CHC/SEK continues to travel to schools for immunizations and dental screenings and supports learning through school health services with nurses and behavioral staff in 18 school districts where staff work daily.

We provide school health services to 57 entities with 91 employees. Employee roles include: medical providers; behavioral health providers; school nurses; school health assistants; community health workers; school health event staff (medical/dental outreach), and coordination team.

CHC/SEK recently opened SBHCs in Iola USD 257, which recently built a new elementary school, and Baxter Springs USD 508. In 2023, we will add two more SBHCs, one in Columbus USD 493 (tentatively March 6) and the other in Fort Scott USD 234 (tentatively August 1).

Soon, we will provide telemedicine in Baxter Springs, Coffeyville, Columbus, Fort Scott, Iola, and Labette County USD 506.

In 2014, Pittsburg USD 250 and CHC/SEK partnered to ensure that all children in the district would have access to school-based medical, dental, and mental health services by utilizing a mobile health clinic, KidCare Connection. It is available regardless of a child's insurance status or income. Bringing a provider to the schools allows students and staff to access care and avoid long periods away from school for their healthcare needs. It is also accessible to parents or guardians and any other person that needs care in the area of the mobile clinic.

We reached out to our School Based Health staff because we wanted to know more about what their day was like and their success stories. They shared the programs they helped with, the type of care they provided, their experience with students who need help with basic needs, and teaching parents how to manage their child's new diagnosis.

***Read their stories below:***



**Arma School Health Assistant Roxy Cramer visits with an Arma High School student on Jan. 26 at the high school clinic.**

**School Health Assistant Roxy Cramer, Arma School District**

*USD 246 High School has encountered an issue with students vaping in the school. Together with the high school administration and counselor, we created a Vape Education Program. I was asked to be the director of the program. I created a 3-day curriculum for the program. I teach the approved curriculum, administer exams and determine if/when the student can exit the program. This is a new occupation for me and I truly enjoy it. I have developed a great relationship with students and staff that I have great respect for. Being someone for students to come to for help and/or comfort is very important to me.*

**Community Health Worker Kaitlynn Finley, Pittsburg School District**

*I help connect students and their families to resources to meet their basic and health needs. I provide support and assistance to our most vulnerable families to ensure that they are able to attend appointments, have adequate food and housing, and find success in and out of the classroom.*

*When a family is connected with a resource that they were not aware of, but now know about, they are able to use it regularly. A large family that I'm working with did not know about the PACT Bus. I gave the mother the bus schedule and that opened up so many possibilities for them. They are able to go grocery shopping, seek needed services/employment, and receive medical care. Something that seems so small to one person can make a world of difference for another.*



*A student that has all of their needs met is more capable of being successful in the classroom. Having CHC within the schools is such a privilege and allows us to wrap around the student and their family to support them in any way that they might need.*



**A Pittsburg Community Middle School student and School Based LCSW Sandy Cullison visit on Feb. 8 at Sandy's office in the middle school.**

### **School Based LCSW Sandy Cullison, Pittsburg School District**

*I provide mental health therapeutic services to middle school and elementary-age students. Throughout the day I may talk to a student about depression and how it affects their lives, anger management concerns, how anxiety works and much more. I help students transition into working on their behavior and options the student can utilize to make positive changes. Other things the students may be dealing with is grief from the loss of a loved one or even the loss of their "normal".*

*Each of the students I work with are success stories. For some of them just demonstrating the ability to share their feelings can be the first step to success. The students that are struggling with depression and/or suicidal thoughts have made strong impressions; to see someone break through the fog of depression, suicidal thoughts and/or self-harm and value themselves in different ways is the ultimate success.*

*It is inspiring to see the progress a student makes throughout the scope of our contact. The bravery to discuss their innermost concerns and address them in session is to see heroism in action. Having the privilege to see students experience "Lightbulb Moments" where they get to see positive results, they*

*have worked on is such a special moment. In addition, when students say they want to be a therapist due to how we have worked together is truly "Food for the Soul."*

**School Nurse Beth Kimzey, RN, Pittsburg School District**

*I work at Pittsburg Community Middle School which has just over 700 students. I see sick children and determine what they need to feel better and back to class, or help them connect to a provider if needed.*

*Often, students may have basic needs that need met. They may come to the nurse's office sharing that their water got shut off and if they could shower there until it's back on. Some students might find themselves in need of menstrual products, brushes, and other items.*

*Having health services available at the school means students succeeding. When you don't feel well, you don't learn well. When you don't have your basic needs met, you can't even think past what you don't have to focus on succeeding.*

*Providing health services at school for parents mean keeping a job because you aren't missing work to take your child to the doctor, saving you gas money driving to appointments, providing the transportation portion for those that do not have a vehicle, and building relationships with a provider that will follow your child through their school years.*



**School Health Medical Assistant Kimberly Stewart checks a Pittsburg Community Middle School student's blood pressure on Thursday, Feb. 2 in the KidCare Connection Mobile Health Clinic.**



## **School Health Assistant Kimberly Stewart, KidCare Connection Mobile Health Clinic**

*The mobile clinic is a resource to the community, traveling to scheduled locations and reaching various populations. I also collaborate with school nurses and organize vaccines, physicals and sick visits for students and staff. I work close with the nurse practitioner to make sure the students are connected to the care they need.*

*As our Marshallese community increased over the last five years, we were able to quickly provide vaccines, schedule Well Child and dental visits to new students that had no previous medical care.*

*I love seeing the progress students and families make as we provide health services and set up dental care. Due to the quick and efficient care we can provide, more families have been utilizing us. It feels good to see the younger students grow, knowing they are healthier because of the difference we make.*



During her daily before-lunch visit to the school clinic on Feb. 3, a Coffeyville Elementary student living with type 1 diabetes calculates what she can have for lunch with the help of School Health Nurse Stephanie Neely Dunlap, RN. They had a celebratory dance after checking her blood sugar and discovering it wasn't high.

## **School Health Nurse Stephanie Neely Dunlap, RN, Coffeyville School District**

*We got a student back from the ICU who was recently diagnosed as a type I Diabetic. During a meeting with the father, he apologized to me and said that he would have to depend and defer a lot to me for her care. He said that he knew nothing about type I diabetes and that it would be a while before they got into an endocrinologist. I told him that navigating complex medical conditions in a school environment is actually why I love this job and that it would be my pleasure to help.*

*Having previously worked as a Med Surg and ER nurse, I never knew how rewarding being a school nurse could be. I get to create relationships of trust over years with many families and their children. Also, working with school staff has been an eye-opening experience. We all work as a team to take care of every aspect of a student's educational and social experience so that they are as successful as possible.*

**School Health Nurse Audra Cochran, RN, Labette County High School in Altamont**

*I feel that anytime I have a student feel comfortable enough to come to me asking questions related to actual situations or just hypotheticals are a success.*

*Sadly, many students do not receive the same healthcare as others and most are often not taught the same topics that most think of as common knowledge. I feel very fortunate that I am here and able to help these students understand the importance of taking care of and understanding their health. Being able to explain to them the health/medical behind things get through to them a lot better than just telling them to do or not do something.*

**School Based Therapist Carlee Gilley, LCSW, Labette County Schools**

*While there are several notable moments to share, the one that sticks out the most is the support and assistance from our Parsons CHC/SEK clinic. I have had instances where I needed gas cards for parents of children, I see to get the items they need, and Taniena (Parsons Practice Manager) has been more than helpful in this area. Kim Landis (Parsons Registration Clerk) is always so helpful, compassionate, and caring when I need to get patients into appointments or have scheduling issues. You can tell she truly cares and upholds the mission.*

*Most recently, I had a family in need of some items for Christmas as well as a stove. Taniena and her team assisted in pulling together resources to make sure this family had everything they needed for the holiday break and to stress a little less financially over Christmas gifts for the children in the home.*

*This was so much appreciated but what uplifted me the most was when I found out that all the items purchased and wrapped were out of staff members personal donation. Having resources is difficult in this area but when you have a team like this that truly cares about the whole person it makes it seem so much easier and internally rewarding to work with such fine humans!*

**School Nurse Emily Cox, RN, Quapaw Public Schools**

*I see students on a daily basis for daily medicines, stomach aches, headaches, applying band aids, giving out icepacks for bumps or peppermints. I enjoy being a listening ear, a smiling face or a warm hug for the students.*

*There are many little moments that happen such as cleaning a student up or helping them get some toothbrushes, hair brushes, and clothing because they don't get those things regularly at home. Their faces light up and they feel better about themselves. Another notable moment is when you can help calm a student down when they are having a rough day.*

*To get to meet the needs of the students is such an incredible feeling to know you help make a difference in someone's life one day at a time, whether it's just a band aid or an icepack. You love these kids as your own the more you get to know them and take care of them.*

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