

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Center for Family Health (CFH) Improves Patient Health, Reduces Health Disparities in the Jackson Community

Since 1991 the Center for Family Health (CFH) has consistently provided quality, affordable health care in Jackson County. CFH is committed to providing the care people need to get healthy and stay healthy!

Each year Center for Family Health utilizes a comprehensive health outcome monitoring system to track our progress in achieving goals set to improve the overall health of our patients.

This year we are very pleased to announce we have made important strides to improve our patients' health status in three key areas: Diabetes Management, Adolescent Oral Health and Infant Birth Weight.

Diabetes Management Through participation in the Bureau of Primary Health Care's Diabetes Collaborative CFH has instituted several innovative approaches and lowered the average Hemoglobin A1C score of our diabetic patients to 7.6%, down from 7.85% in 2008. Hemoglobin A1C is a clinical test used to measure how well a diabetic patient's blood glucose level was managed over a 2-3 month period. It gives health care providers a snapshot to examine how well their treatment plan is working and shows patients how healthy choices can make a difference in diabetes control.

Lower Hemoglobin A1C scores indicate diabetic patients at CFH are maintaining healthier blood glucose levels and have better control over their illness which helps prevent complications from diabetes like kidney disease, heart disease and stroke.

"The staff at Center for Family Health have educated me on how to take care of myself and manage my diabetes," said Ken Burchett, a diabetic patient at CFH. "Their support has helped me regain control of my blood sugar and learn to live a healthier lifestyle."

Adolescent Oral Health CFH also places a high priority on ensuring our adolescent patients and children in the Jackson community have access to and receive the preventive care they need to maintain excellent oral health.

The CFH Mobile Dental Program, which visits 15 schools in Jackson County and has served over 600 children in the last 2 years, along with our dental care sites on West High Street and at Northeast Elementary have made it possible to raise the percentage of adolescents receiving preventive dental care to 61.9% this year.

That percentage is up from 60.83% last year and goes well beyond the national goal of 57% outlined in Healthy People 2010, an important collection of health status goals authored by the United States Public Health Service.

"Having access to dental care just around the corner from our home is very convenient," said Shannon Staelens, the mother of two adolescent dental patients at Northeast Health

Center. “The dental staff at Northeast are all very nice and work hard to take great care of our kids, plus they make it fun for the kids to visit and now they both enjoy seeing the dentist.”

Preventive oral health visits not only help keep children’s teeth healthy, but serve as an educational foundation for maintaining good oral health as an adult. These visits also provide ongoing quality care that helps to prevent severe, costly oral health diseases like tooth decay.

Infant Birth Weight Our third area of significant health status improvement is the percentage of low-birth weight deliveries, which is down to 5.54% from 7.93% last year and 8.3% in Jackson County in 2007. The CFH Women’s Health Center has been diligently working to continue to lower this rate by providing comprehensive pre-natal care and working with expectant mothers and families to ensure they have the support they need both medically and psychologically to deliver and nurture a healthy baby.

“As a first time mother with little support I faced a lot of challenges throughout my pregnancy,” said Chavae Haney, a patient at the CFH Women’s Health Center. “The Maternal and Infant Health Program team at Center for Family Health connected me with the services I needed, like transportation to my pre-natal checkups, to have a healthy baby.”

CFH served 24,066 patients last year, just over 1 in 7 people in Jackson County and 1 in 4 people in the City of Jackson. Nearly 96% of our patients in 2008 were at or below 200% of the federal poverty level and 33% were uninsured.

Additionally, the overwhelming majority of patients affected by the health improvements in each of the three areas above were receiving publicly sponsored health insurance like Medicaid or Medicare, the next largest group was uninsured. Traditionally these populations face barriers to care such as lack of access, lack of transportation and poor social support, to name just three. CFH’s success in substantially improving health status among these difficult populations is a triumph for community-based care in Jackson County.

“We are not only proud of the access to health care that we provide for thousands of Jackson County residents, but of the outstanding and measurable quality of the care that we provide. The medical and dental outcomes that we achieve are remarkable when we consider the economic and social challenges many of our patients face,” said Molly Kaser, Executive Director at CFH. “We are able to achieve and sustain these outcomes because of the strong teamwork, persistence and focus of all of our staff in engaging our patients in taking an active role in their own care.”

Our continuing efforts to improve the health status of our patients translate directly into creating a healthier community for everyone.

The Center for Family Health (CFH) is a non profit community health center that serves more than 24,000 Jackson County residents. Turning no one away, CFH provides outstanding, comprehensive primary health care services for everyone, including those who do not have insurance, cannot afford their deductible or co-pays or are otherwise unable to afford medical care. Everyone is welcome, regardless of life circumstances. For more information please visit www.centerforfamilyhealth.org.