



KATAHDIN VALLEY HEALTH CENTER

P. O. Box 500, 30 Houlton Street
Patten, ME 04765
1-866-366-KVHC
www.kvhc.org

NEWS RELEASE

SOURCE:

Durward L. Humphrey, Executive Director, KVHC

For additional information, please contact:

Gaile Nicholson
Director, Communications
207-528-2285, Ext. 301
gnicholson@kvhc.org

KVHC – Your Health Care Home - CELEBRATES NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK

PATTEN, ME – August 2, 2007 – Each year the second week of August is a special week dedicated to recognizing the service and contributions of Community, Migrant, Homeless and Public Housing Health Centers. America’s Health Centers “Your Health Care Home” is the theme for National Health Center Week 2007.

“America’s health centers have been serving as health care homes for over 40 years. Katahdin Valley Health Center (KVHC) has been a part of the health care center family for more than 33 years, providing continuous primary and preventive care that reduces the risk of new health care problems and lowers the overall potential cost of health care,” said Durward Humphrey, KVHC executive director.

“Today, health centers are expanding to reach more people by removing geographic, language and cultural barriers for patients who do not have a usual source of care. The emphasis this year on a health care home recognizes the importance of the health center mission – to provide a health care home to all Americans in need. Currently health centers across the United States serve

nearly 16 million patients, while continuing to provide high quality, cost effective, accessible care as America's health care home.

“As a health care provider, we see first-hand the critical importance of having a consistent place for people to go for care – a health care home. A health care home means having a place to go to treat everyday ailments – the common cold, a headache or a sore tooth, before these conditions worsen.

“The reality is that across our nation, 56 million people today don't have that option. According to a recent report by the National Association of Community Health Centers and the Robert Graham Center, one in five Americans are without health care options. They live in every state and nearly every county, representing all income levels and types of insurance coverage – and yet they all share one common struggle: access to basic health care.

“Thanks to federally-supported community health centers like KVHC, there is a solution. We proudly serve as the health care home for nearly 6,000 people, keeping them healthy and out of hospitals. Because our health care services are accessible and affordable to everyone, regardless of insurance status, patients are able to get treatment before their health conditions become unmanageable. We keep health costs down and ease the burden on hospital emergency rooms.

“We make a difference in the lives of our patients by providing not only basic medical and dental treatment, optometry, podiatry, psychiatry and mental health and substance abuse counseling but also other enabling services such as patient assistance, referral coordination and case management. We see results day after day in the health outcomes of our patients and the feedback we get from the communities we serve.

“To commemorate the crucial work that Health Centers do to extend care to some of America's neediest people, KVHC invites the public to join in a week-long celebration, August 5-11, focusing the public spotlight on a community-based model of health care that is opening the doors of health and giving millions of Americans, including 750,000 homeless people and approximately 800,000 migrant farm workers, the chance for healthy and productive lives,” said Humphrey.

All events will be at KVHC clinics at Houlton, Island Falls, Millinocket and Patten. KVHC's schedule of events follows:

* **Monday, August 6 at 59 Bangor Street, Houlton, 12-1 p.m.** – Pediatrician W. Ray Byers, M.D. will speak on what to look for in a well care child visit or sports physical and new immunizations recommended for your child.

* **Wednesday, August 8 at 1300 Crystal Road, Island Falls, 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.** – Optometrists Jessica Philbrook, O.D. and Robert Ellis, O.D. will discuss what every parent should know about

their child's eye health. Did you know that one out of ten children is at risk from undiagnosed vision problems? This presentation will send you home with critical information regarding when your child should be seen for their first eye exam and how often they should be examined after that as well as helpful hints on how to determine if your child has a vision or eye health problem that could be an emergency situation.

*** Thursday, August 9 at 180 Aroostook Avenue, Millinocket, 12-1 p.m.** – Stacie Sparkman from the Eastern Agency on Aging will be on hand to speak about the changes to Medicare Part D for the upcoming open enrollment November 15 through December 31. She will also talk about some wonderful changes that the State of Maine has made to help as many people as possible receive extra help paying for their prescriptions.

This will be followed by an award to Maine State Representative Herbert E. Clark for his tireless efforts in the State Legislature as an advocate for affordable health care for all Maine people.

Board certified pediatric dentist Lisa Jacob, D.D.S., M.S. will discuss when and why your child should see a dentist. Dental decay is a serious medical condition that can undermine a child's healthy development. Today, oral disease is the most common chronic childhood disease in America, five times as common as asthma. The mouth is an early warning system, signaling trouble in other parts of the body.

*** Friday, August 10 at 30 Houlton Street, Patten, 12-1 p.m.** – KVHC nursing staff will conduct blood pressure checks. Stan Pettegrow, Licensed Clinical Social Work for KVHC, will discuss mental health and substance abuse treatment plans. Tammy DeLong of the Aroostook Agency on Aging will have information available on the Low Income Subsidies available with Medicare Part D, what income guidelines are eligible for assistance with paying premiums, co-pays and co-insurance. Tammy says, "There are a lot of programs out there for help that people just don't know about. I will have information on Medicare, supplements and Medicare Advantage plans."

If members of the community would like to become a member of the grassroots advocacy program and/or KVHC's community advisory board, KVHC employees will be available to assist.

Community members are invited to come to one or all of the presentations and enjoy grilled hot dogs and sandwich wraps served by KVHC employees.

A Federally Qualified Health Center, Katahdin Valley Health Center (KVHC) is a provider of high quality, cost effective primary health, dental, substance abuse and mental health care to people of all ages in the Greater Katahdin Region. KVHC is a nonprofit business governed by a board of directors, comprised of area volunteers, funded by a federal grant under Section 330 of the Public

Health Service Act of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. KVHC employs 60 people at its facilities in Houlton, Island Falls, Millinocket and Patten. KVHC is a proud member of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). To learn more about health centers, please visit KVHC's web site at www.kvhc.org or www.nachc.com. KVHC is an equal opportunity employer.

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