

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Media Contact:**

Carla Newman  
[publicaffairs@legacycommunityhealth.org](mailto:publicaffairs@legacycommunityhealth.org)  
(713) 814-3379

### **School-Based Health Care Keeps Kids Healthy and Learning**

*Legacy Community Health's 37 school-based clinics provide life-changing medical and mental health services where students need them most*

**HOUSTON, TX (February 20, 2025)** – What if students could see a pediatrician, dentist, or therapist without ever leaving school? School-Based Health Care services have a profound impact on student well-being and academic success, ensuring children receive essential care without disrupting their education. As the **largest school-based health care program in Texas**, Legacy operates 37 clinics across the Greater Houston and Galena Park Area, providing primary care and behavioral health to students, siblings and children of staff at YES Prep, KIPP, and Galena Park ISD. This month, we recognize School-Based Health Awareness Month, reinforcing the importance of accessible and convenient health care in schools.

Legacy Community Health's School-Based Health Care removes barriers to medical and behavioral health services by bringing them directly to school campuses, making essential health care more accessible for students. By providing care where children learn, the program ensures that students receive high-quality medical and behavioral health attention in school and helps to reduce missed time from class, and help them stay healthy and focused on their education.

Many children struggle with untreated medical conditions, mental health concerns, or limited access to preventative care, which can impact their academic success. By bringing health care into schools, Legacy allows families to reduce time off from work for doctor's visits and gives parents a peace of mind while ensuring students stay healthy, engaged, and ready to learn.

"Legacy's school-based health clinics are a game-changer for families," said Stephanie Ramirez, VP of School-Based Health. "By bringing doctors, therapists, and dental care directly to schools, we help students stay healthy, reduce absenteeism, and perform better in the classroom—without parents needing to take time off work."

Legacy's school-based clinics offer a wide range of services designed to support students' physical and emotional well-being, including:

- **Pediatric Care** – Well-child checkups, vaccinations, asthma treatment, cold and flu care, and minor injury treatment.
- **Behavioral Health & Therapy** – Counseling for anxiety, depression, trauma, family stress, and academic pressure.
- **Dental Services** – Complete cleanings, exams, fillings, extractions, and stainless-steel crowns.
- **Vision Screenings & Referrals** – Early detection of vision problems to improve classroom focus and performance.

These critical health services ensure that students receive preventative care and early intervention, reducing the risk of long-term health issues and helping them stay engaged in their education.

For students like Jocelyn Garcia, a senior at KIPP Northeast College Preparatory, the support provided by school-based health services has been life-changing. “At one point, everything in my life felt like it was falling apart—work, school, and home problems,” she said. “Having access to therapy at school has helped me so much, emotionally and even academically. It has given me the space to talk, express my feelings, and learn how to advocate for myself. I don’t think I’d be where I am today without this program.”

With rising cases of anxiety, depression, and self-harm among students, access to mental health support is more important than ever. “School counselors are seeing an alarming increase in student stress and mental health struggles, even among younger children,” said Stephanie Ramirez. “Through Legacy’s school-based counseling and behavioral health services, students can access professional mental health support in a safe and familiar environment—helping them build coping skills, confidence, and resilience.”

Many students hesitate to seek help due to fear of judgment or stigma around mental health. Legacy’s school-based therapists ensure students receive compassionate, nonjudgmental support. “Unlike other people, the first thing my therapist did wasn’t judge me—it was support me,” Garcia said. “And that’s what young people really need today.”

Access to affordable, high-quality care remains a challenge for many families. Legacy Community Health ensures cost is never a barrier by accepting CHIP, Medicaid, and Medicare and offering a sliding scale fee structure. Legacy’s eligibility teams work with families to connect them with available resources and financial assistance programs.

“School-based health care is more than just treating illnesses—it’s about creating healthier, more resilient communities,” said Interim CEO Robert Palussek. “By ensuring students receive regular checkups, mental health support, and essential vaccinations, Legacy is empowering children to thrive inside and outside the classroom.”

While Legacy currently operates 37 school-based clinics, the demand for accessible student health services continues to grow. By expanding partnerships with school districts, Legacy aims to bring these vital resources to even more students across the Greater Houston and surrounding Area. Families, school administrators, and district leaders interested in learning more can visit <http://www.legacycommunityhealth.org/programs/school-based-health-care/> to explore partnership opportunities.

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### About Legacy Community Health

Legacy Community Health (Legacy) is a full-service network of community health clinics offering primary and specialty care in the Texas Gulf Coast region. Services include adult primary care, behavioral health services, community outreach, dental care, endocrinology, geriatrics, comprehensive HIV/AIDS care, nutrition and wellness, OB/GYN and maternity care, pediatrics, pharmacy, public health, school-based health, social services, and vision care. With more than 57 locations across Houston, Baytown, Deer Park, Stafford and Beaumont, Legacy is the largest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Texas. Legacy has been a United Way-affiliated agency since 1990. To learn more, visit [www.legacycommunityhealth.org](http://www.legacycommunityhealth.org).