

Groundbreaking Ceremony for School-Based Health Center in Piketon, Ohio

New Facility To Serve Students, Community

PIKETON, OH, UNITED STATES, May 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Scioto Valley Local School District](#), alongside [Valley View Health Centers](#), recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for a transformative \$1.69 million school-based health center. The event, which took place on April 24, marks a significant milestone in addressing healthcare accessibility for students and families within the community. Funded through Governor Mike DeWine's investment in Ohio's Appalachian communities, this project highlights a proactive approach to tackling long-standing health disparities that have affected families in the region.



Representatives from Scioto Valley Local Schools, Valley View Health Centers, and other partners move some dirt during groundbreaking

The health center will occupy a 5,500-square-foot facility situated at Piketon Jr./Sr. High School, strategically integrating healthcare services with educational settings. This collaboration aims to remove barriers to healthcare access, directly benefiting students, staff, and their families. Wes Hairston, superintendent of Scioto Valley Local School District, expressed his enthusiasm and commitment, stating, "Having a school-based health clinic on campus is absolutely amazing. Our students, staff, and the larger community will greatly benefit from these services. We are dedicated to fostering a thriving educational environment, and providing healthcare is a crucial aspect of that mission."

“ This program signifies our commitment to the community and our recognition of the interconnectedness of health and social supports”
Keith Pitts, CEO of the Community Action Committee of Pike County

The new health center is designed to provide a wide range of comprehensive services. These include primary care, dental care, healthy lifestyle education, and behavioral health support. This holistic approach underscores the importance of addressing various health needs under one

roof, promoting patient convenience and continuity of care. Keith Pitts, CEO of the [Community Action Committee of Pike County](#)/Valley View Health Centers, added, "Integrating healthcare services within schools removes access barriers and fosters an environment where students thrive. This initiative serves immediate health needs and builds the foundation for lifelong wellness."

The significance of providing these health services cannot be overstated. Key benefits expected from the center's operations include reduced absenteeism, improved academic outcomes, and an enhanced school climate. By offering affordable and convenient healthcare options, the center aims to decrease hospitalizations and emergency room visits, ultimately leading to a healthier student population that can focus on their education without significant health disruptions.

In conjunction with the health center, Valley View will launch a Community Empowerment Program that features a dedicated team of community health workers. These professionals will assist families in navigating social services and community resources. The program intends to bridge potential gaps in access to care and support, ensuring families receive the comprehensive assistance they need. "This program signifies our commitment to the community and our recognition of the interconnectedness of health and social supports," Pitts noted.

This partnership, supported by the Appalachian Children's Health Initiative, highlights the importance of community collaboration in addressing the unique challenges faced by youth. Leaders from various sectors are rallying around this initiative to create sustainable solutions for student health and well-being. Lydia Mihalik, director of the Ohio Department of Development, underlined this sentiment, stating, "The new clinic ensures that every student has access to needed care within their community, eliminating previously encountered obstacles."

Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted's broader \$64 million initiative aims to improve healthcare access in 36 communities across 20 Appalachian counties in Ohio. As part of this initiative, the Piketon health center exemplifies how targeted investment can yield localized benefits. Randy Leite, executive director of the Appalachian Children Coalition, praised the collaboration, stating, "The new facility will deliver tailored primary care and behavioral health services that are essential in supporting the diverse needs of our youth."

This school health project closely aligns with the ongoing efforts of Nationwide Children's Hospital, which is committed to promoting student health through convenient access to care across educational settings. According to Mary Kay Irwin, EdD, senior director of school health services for Nationwide Children's, "When students are healthy, they're better prepared to learn, grow, and succeed. We are excited about the impact this center will have on the community for years to come."

The groundbreaking of the school-based health center at Piketon Jr./Sr. High School represents a vital step toward ensuring all children have the health resources they need to succeed in their

education and future endeavors. Community leaders and advocates look forward to witnessing how this initiative will reshape health accessibility for students in Piketon and beyond.

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