



Health Center on wheels will roll back to Arthur Hill High after legislators restore funding

Published: Saturday, September 18, 2010, 11:50 PM



Tom Gilchrist | The Saginaw News

SAGINAW — Angelia D. Williams says restored state funding for a mobile medical unit at Arthur Hill High School is just what the doctor ordered for hundreds of Saginaw School District students relying on treatment inside the portable “health center.”

“There are so many positive outcomes,” said Williams, director of special projects for Health Delivery Inc., a Saginaw-based nonprofit organization that operates the unit, a motor home-style vehicle with two exam rooms, a laboratory area and a reception area.

The vehicle will roll back to Arthur Hill and open up in late November, seeing students for examinations, immunizations, physical ailments, pregnancy/sexually transmitted disease testing and mental-health issues such as depression, anxiety and anger.

State Sen. Roger Kahn, R-Saginaw Township, announced Thursday that state funds have been restored for operation of the program at Arthur Hill, 3115 Mackinaw, which has about 1,200 students.

A press release from Kahn’s office stated the Arthur Hill unit will receive \$286,200 in state and federal money.

Williams said the mobile medical unit stopped operating June 11 at Arthur Hill because state had cut funding. More than 500 children and young adults visited the unit in a 14-month period from May 2009 until it closed in June, according to Williams.

“We are grateful to Sen. Kahn for all his efforts to restore funding,” Williams said.

Those 10 to 21 can receive treatment inside the unit, and “no child is denied service at the health center based upon their ability to pay for the services,” Williams said.

“We believe healthier kids are better learners,” Williams said.

Students who say they’re sick and want to go home must first be evaluated by staff inside the Mobile Medical Unit, Williams said.

“If a child goes to the office and says, ‘I really don’t feel well,’ that child will be directed to the (Mobile Medical Unit),

and they will triage that student to find out what the problem is," Williams said.

"Usually it's a headache from not eating, or from a general minor medical condition, so they're given food or Tylenol and we assist them and allow them to go back to class, but it's at the discretion of a licensed clinical family nurse practitioner."

If students are uninsured, workers can enroll them in insurance plans for uninsured families, according to Williams.

Health Delivery officials say their School-Based Health Center inside Saginaw High School, 3100 Webber, has reduced student truancy and absenteeism by 40 percent since it opened inside a former wood-shop classroom in 2007.

While Saginaw School District officials couldn't confirm the percentage, they agree the School-Based Health Center keeps more kids in school.

Williams said Health Delivery continues raising funds to build the same type of Health Center inside Arthur Hill.

The 1,448-square-foot center — with a waiting room, front office, two exam rooms, social worker's room, family nurse practitioner's office, records/storage area and mini-laboratory — will be a doctor's office in a school. Health Delivery Inc. plans a 1,751-square-foot Health Center at Arthur Hill.

© 2010 MLive.com. All rights reserved.