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Ribbon Cutting Celebration, August 7, for School-Based Health Center at Stefani Elementary School

Next month, Merced City School District (MCSD) and Golden Valley Health Centers (GVHC) will host a Children's Health Day and ribbon cutting ceremony at Ranchero Health Center. This is GVHC's first school-based health center in Merced County. It is located adjacent to Joe Stefani Elementary School.

The new health center will provide an array of services including Pediatrics and Family Medicine, Dental Care, and Behavioral Health. Equipped with six exam rooms, three large dental operator rooms, and a spacious waiting room, this clinic boasts over 4,000 square feet.

Ranchero Health Center will be the sixth school campus health center under the Golden Valley Health Centers umbrella of clinics. Currently, the organization operates five other school-based health centers: two in Modesto, one in Empire, one in Westley, and one in Riverbank. These centers provide health education and medical services to students and community members living in the vicinity of the school. School-based clinics are a convenient option for many students and families, especially those with transportation barriers that make it difficult to visit a clinic.

GVHC is proud to partner with Merced City School District on the project to better serve the healthcare needs of students and Merced residents. "We are pleased to see this project taking shape after years of planning," said Golden Valley Health Centers' Chief Executive Officer, David Quackenbush. "We understand the critical need for medical services in rural areas and this is truly our mission, to ensure high-quality health care is accessible to everyone."

GVHC serves more than 145,000 patients each year throughout Merced, Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties, playing a vital role in building healthy communities. School-based health centers are unique in that they provide an important point of access for students, by bringing healthcare, dental care and counseling directly to where students and families already spend much of their time, at school.

"What a great opportunity it is to have a partnership with GVHC, and the ability to offer families of Franklin and Stefani Elementaries healthcare services within walking distance from school and home," said Superintendent, Julianna Stocking.

A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Children's Health Day celebration will be held on August 7 from 8-11 am at the Ranchero Clinic, 2752 Ranchero Lane, Merced. This event is open to the

public and will feature community resources, a backpack giveaway, prizes, entertainment, snacks and refreshments, as well as clinic tours.

The expected open date for the clinic is September 13, 2024. Hours of operation will be Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 12:00 and 1:00 pm – 5.

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