



NM Assembly on School-Based Health Care
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MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rep. Tom Udall to cut ribbon on state's newest school-based health center Proponents hope center will stem teen suicides, alcohol use

SANTA FE (dateline: the city from which the press release is issued)—New Mexico Representative Tom Udall will cut the ribbon to celebrate the opening of a new school-based health center in the Navajo town of To'Hajiilee in Bernalillo County on Friday, March 3. School-based health centers (SBHCs) are accessible, youth-friendly centers that provide a variety of physical and mental health services to all students regardless of their ability to pay or their insurance status.

To'Hajiilee is a small town in a rural setting, meaning few of its families have had adequate access to health care. Because the community is largely Native Americans, the youth there tend to have poorer health outcomes than the state's general population. Native American youth are also twice as likely to be uninsured as non-Native New Mexicans and have higher rates of suicide and substance abuse.

"Bringing health care to our children right at their schools makes sense," said Rep. Udall, who sponsored the legislation that made funding for the To'Hajiilee SBHC possible.

WHAT: Ribbon cutting

WHO: Rep. Tom Udall, NMASBHC representatives, To'Hajiilee community leaders and students

WHEN: Friday, March 3, 2pm

WHERE: To'Hajiilee Elementary (see attached map)

WHY: To celebrate the state's newest school-based health center

There are currently 34 SBHCs in New Mexico in both rural and urban settings. Governor Richardson has proposed an initiative to double that number to 68. Funding for SBHCs comes from a variety of sources, but they do not take financial resources away from the schools themselves.

SBHCs complement our educational system because healthy children learn better. Parents and the immediate community decide which types of services they will offer. Because SBHCs are located on school grounds they are in an excellent position to identify suicidal students and intervene before it's too late. The presence of SBHCs also cuts down on alcohol and drug use among teens because their intervention programs are highly effective.

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