

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cooperstown** – Bassett Healthcare Network is pleased to announce the opening of a new school-based health center (SBHC) at Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School, serving pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade students in the school district. It is Bassett's 21<sup>st</sup> school-based health center in central New York. The program has been funded through a grant and monies secured by NYS Senator James Seward, as well as a generous contribution by the Clark Foundation.

Students enrolled in SBH in the Gilbertsville-Mount Upton school district will receive primary care services from pediatric nurse practitioner Tricia Kuhnau. Dr. Kerri LeBlanc, Bassett pediatrician and co-director of the School-Based Health Program, is available for consultation and will be on site at the school one to two times each month. Mario Molinaro, licensed mental health counselor, is available to provide mental health counseling. A registered dental hygienist is also available periodically through the year to provide preventive dental

services, referrals, and individual and classroom oral health education. SBH collaborates closely with the school nurse.

“We have an amazing team of individuals here in Gilbertsville-Mount Upton and in all the communities that SBH serves,” says Dr. Chris Kjolhede, Bassett pediatrician and co-director of the School-Based Health Program. “They are dedicated to caring for these children and addressing their needs individually. It is our passion and shared commitment to improve the health of the population Bassett serves.”

The SBHC may become a child’s primary source of health care. If a child already has a health care provider, the SBHC will work with that provider in caring for the child. Care provided in the SBHC setting includes:

- Annual physical examinations
- Immunizations
- Diagnosis and treatment of both short-and long-term illnesses
- Mental health services
- Health education
- Preventive dental care

The only requirement children must meet to enroll in SBH is that they must be a student in the Gilbertsville-Mount Upton school district. No family pays out-of-pocket for any services

provided at a SBHC. If a student has insurance, the SBHC will bill the student's health insurance for services provided at the clinic. For those without insurance, the SBHC can help enroll eligible children into Child Health Plus, the state's health insurance plan for children.

"We are so excited to introduce this program into our community," says Annette Hammond, superintendent of Gilbertsville-Mount Upton Central School. "It takes a village to raise a child, and we have an incredible village. Our school-based health center has come together with the support of many constituents. We are grateful to Bassett Healthcare Network for their partnership on this journey and also extend our true appreciation to the Clark Foundation and Senator James Seward. This program will be tremendously positive for our school district and rural area."

During the 2019-2020 school year, Bassett's SBH centers provided a total of 28,374 visits to students in 20 school districts; 19,162 were medical visits; 7,218 were mental health visits; and 1,994 were preventive dental visits. Despite early school closures due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, SBH has still been operational in some schools and has been able to provide Telehealth services to families. In addition, many SBHC locations remain open for summer hours; call SBH's toll-free number, 844-255-7242, to find a location near you.

Gilbertsville-Mount Upton's SBHC will be open on days school is in session along with limited summertime hours. During non-school days, parents may call 844-255-7242 to be connected with a SBH medical or mental health provider or make an appointment at an open SBHC.