



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HEART OF OHIO FAMILY HEALTH CENTERS™ CELEBRATES NATIONAL  
HEALTH CENTER WEEK BY MAKING HOUSE CALLS**

**Whitehall, Ohio**—Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers™ will celebrate National Health Center Week, August 9-15, 2009, with a Neighborhood Outreach Project that takes health care providers to the homes of people in need. During this six-day project, Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers™ staff will go door-to-door in the city of Whitehall to assess the healthcare needs of the city’s most economically challenged residents. Staff will be conducting health assessment surveys as well as distributing information on local health and wellness services, vision care resources, dental care resources, and diabetes screening information. Staff and volunteers will be in Whitehall neighborhoods from noon to 6:30 p.m. on August 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, and 20.

“Everyone should have the choice of a Community Health Center as their health care home,” said Joy Parker, CEO of Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers™. “We provide high-quality services that emphasize primary care and wellness so that families can stay healthy and out of hospitals. National Health Center Week is a time to spread the message that we need to invest in an accessible and affordable community health system that can reduce disparities, improve health and achieve cost savings.”

Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers™ operates two federally qualified health centers: Whitehall Family Health Center located at 882 S. Hamilton Rd., Whitehall, and Capital Park Family Health Center

located at 2150 Agler Rd., Columbus. Both are currently taking new patients and everyone is accepted, regardless of ability to pay.

The health centers provide primary care services to a diverse population of over 3,500 patients from more than 90 zip codes, many of whom are underserved and/or uninsured. Nearly 30% of Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers™ patients do not speak English, the majority of which are Somali and Spanish. Whitehall Family Health Center also provides OB/GYN services, a critical need of many underserved in Central Ohio.

“There is a big emphasis on educating patients about their disease and suggesting lifestyle modification to help manage the disease,” Dr. Renu Soni, Chief Medical Director for Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers said. “We hope to bring about a positive change in the community’s health one patient at a time.”

Events marking National Health Center Week 2009 include health fairs, media events and visits by local, state and national leaders to health centers in their communities.

The spotlight comes at a time when the American Recovery or Reinvestment Act (ARRA), or the federal economic stimulus bill, has made increased access to care possible. Community Health Centers were among the first recipients of stimulus funding; \$338 million in so-called Increased Demand for Services grants will enable health centers to provide quality care to an additional 2.1 million patients over the next two years.

Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers™ recently received federal stimulus funding to expand the Whitehall facility and has applied for additional funding to build a new, 10,000 square foot health center in the northeast quadrant of Columbus.

Long-term, health centers are envisioned as a major part of the solution for providing care to the 60 million people in the United States who are – according to a report by the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) – medically disenfranchised. A health center plan called *ACCESS for All America* has the goal of preserving, strengthening and expanding health centers, ultimately

providing affordable, high-quality care to all medically underserved. For more information, visit [www.healthcenterweek.org](http://www.healthcenterweek.org).

"The 'defining moment' for Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers happens with each individual patient seen by our excellent team of health professionals," Board Chair Marty Miller said. "It is the smile on the face of the Hispanic patient whose blood pressure is finally under control, or the sigh of relief from the Somali woman who is thankful that someone understands her health needs and culture, or the gentle touch of an elderly patient's hand that says 'thanks for being here for me.' These are defining moments of the heart that unite the medical staff, the administrative staff and the Board of Directors in a quest to genuinely improve the health of the people and communities we serve."

The mission of Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers™ is to provide high-quality, holistic and sensitive care to meet the healthcare needs of our community, where we honor every person with loving service.

To donate, volunteer, or for more information about Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers™, please contact Executive Director Joy Parker at 614.338.6821, 882 S. Hamilton Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43213.

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## Federally Qualified Health Center Fact Sheet

- Health centers serve more than 18 million people – or about 1 in 18 people in the U.S. – at locations in more than 7,000 communities. For these 18 million people, their local Community Health Center is their “health care home,” and it’s where their access and quality care begin.
- Health centers provide access to primary and preventive care that keeps people healthy. This care is accessible because it is
  - Affordable – patients pay on an income-based sliding fee scale, and no one is turned away.
  - Culturally competent – providers speak a patient’s language and treat patients with dignity.
  - Available in tough times – you can seek care at a health center even if you have no insurance, which is really important for many people who have recently been laid off.
- Health centers provide quality care. They are cited as models for screening, diagnosing and managing chronic disease... and credited for reducing racial and ethnic disparities. (A study by Johns Hopkins University shows that the quality of care at health centers is as good as, or better than that of, other primary health care providers.)
- It’s important to note during the national health reform debate that there are 60 million medically disenfranchised people in the United States. Because they provide such access and quality care, in addition to being very cost-effective, Community Health Centers ought to be a part of the health care solution, as the “health care home” for those 60 million. (An aggressive plan to make this a reality, called *ACCESS for All America*, is being carried forward, with the goal of preserving, strengthening and expanding health centers – ultimately providing affordable, high-quality care to all medically underserved.)

