

Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers Celebrates National Health Center Week 2010

WHITEHALL, Ohio—Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers celebrated National Health Center Week 2010 with an open house and dedication ceremony at Whitehall Family Health Center, 882 S. Hamilton Rd., on Aug. 12 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. This event was part of a weeklong campaign (August 8-14) to raise awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America's Health Centers, and was one of 1,400 events nationwide.

The open house marked the first anniversary of the Whitehall Family Health Center and included a dedication ceremony in honor of former Congressman David Hobson. Congressman Hobson was instrumental in securing funding for the establishment of the Whitehall Family Health Center in 2009.

"I have been deeply and personally committed to improving health care for many years, and am proud to have been an advocate for this much needed medical facility here in Whitehall," former Congressman David Hobson said during a speech at the event.

"Dave Hobson is the kind of person that goes into Congress for the right reasons," Congressman Pat Tiberi said about the honoree. "He puts people first."

"We need more Dave Hobson's in Congress," State Representative Nancy Garland said. "He cares a lot about health care."

The event featured health center tours, free diabetes and blood pressure screenings, and free health information for community members. Speakers included: Congressman Pat Tiberi, Bob Clark, a representative from Congressman Steve Austria's office, former Congressman David Hobson, State Representative Nancy Garland, and Whitehall Mayor John Wolfe.

Whitehall Family Health Center received proclamations from the Whitehall Mayor, Congressman Pat Tiberi, and the Franklin County Commissioners for providing high quality health care to the Whitehall community. Mayor Wolfe also proclaimed that August 12, 2010 would be recognized as "Whitehall Family Health Center and Congressman David L. Hobson Day."

"It is important to honor those institutions that serve a vital role in the promotion of health and well-being within our community," Tiberi said. "After years of planning and countless hours of hard work and cooperation between private businesses and all levels of government, we stand here today to spotlight what has already become a welcome addition to Central Ohio's pursuit of public health."

One of the bright spots in America's health care system, Community Health Centers are the family doctor to over 20 million people at 8,000 sites nationwide. Their critical role in providing quality primary care has been widely praised by bipartisan Congressional leaders and the last two Presidential Administrations. Health centers have also been in the public spotlight because now more than ever the uninsured and casualties of the economic recession are seeking their services. That is why funds from the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act** have made it possible for health centers to serve over two million patients, and over one million uninsured patients. And with health reform, the U.S. health care system will save up to \$122 billion in total health care costs between 2011 and 2015 with the expansion of health centers, according to an analysis by the Geiger Gibson/RCHN Community Health Foundation Research Collaborative at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services.

"Every day in our waiting rooms, I witness the value of having a health care home," said Joy Parker, CEO of Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers. "When people have a place to go for regular

care, they use it and stay healthy. We provide a range of services onsite – primary medical care; OB/GYN services; diagnostic laboratory; referral for dental services; screening and maintenance for mental health issues; case management, transportation, interpretation and other enabling services. Our patients not only get the care they need under one roof, but they are treated as individuals, with dignity and respect. This is what health care should be, and what we celebrate during National Health Center Week.”

Health centers will expand their capacity to double the number of patients to 40 million in five years under health reform, saving the U.S. health care system as much as \$300 billion over the next ten years by treating people before they get sick and require costlier care at a hospital.

Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers operates two federally qualified health centers in Central Ohio: Whitehall Family Health Center and Capital Park Family Health Center. In September, Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers will break ground on a new 12,500 sq. ft. facility which will replace the existing Capital Park Family Health Center located at 2150 Agler Rd., thanks to \$4.4 million in economic stimulus funding from the Department of Health and Human Services. The new health care facility will be located on Innis Road in Columbus, less than 1 mile from the current facility, and is scheduled to open in August 2011.

Local sponsors of Heart of Ohio Family Health Center’s National Health Center Week 2010 event include Molina Healthcare and Kroger.