



City of Brockton

**BROCKTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Basan Nembirkow ♦ Superintendent of Schools



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## **New Medical Partnerships will Benefit Students & Families**

*Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center brings together  
Brockton Public Schools and Brockton Neighborhood Health Center*

The Brockton Neighborhood Health Center (BNHC) has partnered with the Brockton Public Schools to provide healthcare assistance to students, nurses and administrators throughout the school year. Through this important collaboration, the downtown healthcare provider will furnish the 15,500-student school district with doctor's standing orders for nurses to administer emergency medication, provide a "medical home" for students who do not have physicals or a primary care provider, and offer ongoing professional development for Brockton Public Schools health staff throughout the year.

"A major part of our mission as a neighborhood health center is community service, and we believe this partnership will fulfill our goal of assisting community partners," said Linda Gabruk, Brockton Neighborhood Health Center Chief Operating Officer. "We are pleased to work with the schools and with students and families to ensure that Brockton children have access to health care."

The partnership was formed this summer with the assistance of Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center leaders, and will provide students with increased services.

"When the school department approached us to fill this need, we were happy to reach out to the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center, one of our long-standing partners, to determine what would best serve the students," said John Keefe, MD, vice president of medical affairs at Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center. "The health of the children of our community is vital to their success in school, both on and off the athletic field. We were pleased to help foster this new partnership between the Brockton Neighborhood Health Center and the Brockton Public Schools."

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As part of the collaboration, the BNHC will assist families by serving as a “medical home” for students who do not have a primary care physician. The BNHC physicians will conduct physical examinations, which are required of all student athletes every 13 months, for every student in Pre-K, Kindergarten and Grades 4, 7 and 10, and also for all students new to the Brockton Public Schools. Massachusetts is the first state in the nation to require all citizens to have healthcare coverage, and BNHC staff members will assist uninsured families in securing medical coverage. BNHC also offers comprehensive translation services to assist families with language barriers.

“All children need to have a comprehensive physical for their own well-being, and they need to have a health home, so that there is a physician monitoring their growth and overall health,” said Lorraine Kuplast, Director of Nursing Services for the Brockton Public Schools. “The goal of the school system and the Nursing Department is to ensure that all children have healthcare and grow and learn in a healthy environment. This partnership will directly benefit Brockton children.”

In addition to providing services to students and their families, the partnership with BNHC will benefit Brockton Public Schools nurses, Kuplast said. BNHC doctors will provide school nurses with standing doctor’s orders allowing them to dispense medication in emergency situations, like administering an EpiPen should a child go into shock as the result of a bee sting or peanut allergy, and provide professional development throughout the school year. BNHC doctors will also provide medical consultation services to the Nursing Department and ongoing education on health issues.

One of the most pressing services is for Brockton High School athletes who are preparing for fall tryouts. Every summer, scores of athletes arrive for fall sports tryouts without a current physical, said Athletic Director Thomas Kenney. Now the Brockton High School nurse will be able to schedule appointments for those athletes at the BNHC, so that the athletes will have comprehensive physicals at the new Main Street health center.

“The Neighborhood Health Center and Caritas Good Samaritan Medical Center have worked very hard to meet our needs while at the same time trying to improve the quality of services that our students are receiving. They are providing a great service to all of us in the Brockton Public Schools,” Kenney said. “I think this partnership is also going to make students aware of a great resource we have in the city.”

Tryouts for Brockton High School Fall Athletic programs will begin the week of August 18, 2008, and physical examinations must be on file with the school nurse by that time. Any student athlete who does not have a current physical and cannot get one through a primary care provider in time for August 18<sup>th</sup> must register with the Brockton High School nurse on August 5, 6 or 7<sup>th</sup> between 9 a.m. and noon. The nurse will then schedule a physical for that student at the BNHC the following week. *Please note: athletes must be accompanied to their BNHC physical by a parent or guardian.*

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