

**February 10, 2011**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Public Health Dental Clinic VIP Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**

**(Hillsdale, MI)** The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency invites you to attend a **VIP Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Building Tour**. Come see the new Hillsdale Public Health Dental clinic. Also tour the newly renovated Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) Services office and Health Department offices. Following the ceremony, there will be an open house for the entire building. The event is scheduled for **February 18, 2011 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.** It will take place in the lower level of the Hillsdale Office. The Hillsdale Office is located at 20 Care Drive, Hillsdale Michigan.

According to Steve Todd, Health Officer for the tri-county health department, "The new dental clinic uses state of the art dental equipment, including digital radiography and electronic medical records. The open house offers a great opportunity for the community to stop in, take a tour and ask questions about these new services."

Mr. Todd adds, "Access to dental care has been an ongoing problem for many people who lack dental insurance. The federal government designated Hillsdale County as a dental health professional shortage area. Simply put, this means that there are not enough dental professionals for the number of residents. As a result of this shortage, between 2006 and 2008, the Michigan Department of Community Health estimated that 1/3 of county residents did not visit a dentist or a dental clinic during the previous year. We know that failure to get regular dental check ups increases the risk of developing gum disease." Dr. Thomas Veryser, Executive Director of the Michigan Community Dental Clinics, Inc. (MCDC), stated "Giving low-income residents access to free dental care improves oral health care, overall health and self-confidence. That increases their ability to get a job, learn in school, and attain success in other endeavors."

The clinic represents a joint venture between the health department, the Northern Health Foundation and the MCDC, a non-profit, management services corporation. This corporation was created to manage a network of health department-associated dental clinics. This opening represents its 18<sup>th</sup> dental clinic in Michigan since 2006. Funding for the clinic was provided by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Hillsdale Community Foundation, United Way of Hillsdale Michigan, and the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency Health Plan.

The clinic is currently enrolling patients. It is scheduled to open March 7, 2011. The clinic provides the following services:

- Oral Exam/Cleaning
- Fillings
- Tooth Removal
- Teeth replacement (including dentures and partial dentures)
- Fluoride treatment
- Emergency treatment

The clinic accepts both adult and children on Medicaid, as well as low income, uninsured individuals. Individuals whose incomes are below 200% of the Federal poverty income (i.e., below \$44,100 for a family of four) and who are without dental insurance coverage, can enroll for a small fee. Once enrolled, these individuals will receive dental services at the clinic for a reduced rate. People interested in learning more about how to register as a patient can call: 517-437-2654 or toll free: 877-313-6232; or visit the health department's website at: [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org).

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