

# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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# NEWS RELEASE

August 29, 2011  
For Immediate Release

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## Partnership's Efforts Address Health Needs of HeadStart Children

Oneida County's *Lead Primary Prevention Program* (LPP), in cooperation with the Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency (MVCAA), will partner with other community agencies to provide medical and dental screenings and services for children enrolled in the HeadStart Program, Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. announced today.

More than a dozen agencies will take part in a program to be held on Tuesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm at the Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency on River Road in Marcy. The program is intended to insure that children who might not otherwise receive regular medical and dental care be provided services before HeadStart classes commence in September, Picente said.

*"During these difficult fiscal times, it's essential that we develop creative public/private initiatives to insure the needs of our community's children are met,"* Picente said. He added, *"I commend each of these providers for taking time from their busy schedules to provide children from low income families the necessary services that will allow them to begin their HeadStart school experience and to once again demonstrate the broad range of resources that can be leveraged when the public and private sectors work together for the benefit of our community."*

Among the agencies and services available at the event:

- Physical exams: Dr. Susan Blatt, Medical Director of the Oneida County Health Department
- Body Mass Index, Height and Weight Measurements, Hearing Testing: HeadStart staff
- Vision Screening: Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Immunizations: Oneida County Health Department's Clinic Staff
- Lead Testing and Lead Poisoning Prevention Education: Oneida County's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
- Developmental Screening: Dr. Andy Lopez-Williams, ADHD & Autism Advocates
- Dental Exams: Dr. Charles Burns and Staff
- Nutrition Information: WIC Program
- Medical Providers and Insurance Assistance: Mohawk Valley Perinatal Network

There will be an entertaining lead puppet show performed by the *Dancing Bear Puppet Theater* and healthy snacks provided by Chobani Yogurt. The Multicultural Association of Medical Interpreters (MAMI) will provide interpreters in several languages including Somali, Maay Maay, Spanish and Karen.

Dr. Gayle Jones, Oneida County Director of Health, says that while the goal is for every child to eventually have a primary healthcare provider, some needs are more immediate.

*"We recognize that some newly arrived families have not had the opportunity to establish medical and dental providers for their children or lack the insurance resources to pay for such care and might otherwise be forced to wait several months for an appointment. This community partnership program provides the preventative health services that insures these children begin their education experience in a timely manner while assisting the families in obtaining insurance and medical providers at the same time."*