



**RIPLEY UNION
LEWIS HUNTINGTON
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Tracy McGuire, Marketing & Community Relations Director, PrimaryPlus,
McGuireT@primaryplus.net or 606-202-7377

James L. Wilkins II, Superintendent, Ripley Union Lewis Huntington School District,
james.wilkins@rulh.us or 937-392-4396

School-Based Health Center Opening in Ripley on May 4

*RULH School District partners with PrimaryPlus
to offer health care to community at elementary school*

RIPLEY, OH, April 28, 2020 - PrimaryPlus, a Federally Qualified Health Center, has partnered with Ripley Union Lewis Huntington School District to open a school-based health center for the entire RULH community.

The 1,550 square foot PrimaryPlus-Ripley opens May 4 on the Catherine Street side of RULH Elementary School, 502 S. Second St. in Ripley.

The center's staff, led by Family Health Nurse Practitioner Carissa Kirk, APRN, a Ripley resident and graduate of RULH High School, will provide primary care for the entire family. Services include preventative care for all ages, immunizations, sick and well visits, chronic disease management and more. Clinical pharmacy services will also be offered and medications will be delivered from the PrimaryPlus-Maysville Pharmacy directly to patient's home.

"We are thrilled to open our first location in Ohio, especially in a time when healthcare accessibility is so critical," said Jerry Ugrin, Chief Executive Officer of PrimaryPlus, which operates seven health centers in Northeastern Kentucky. "Our staff delivers high quality, affordable health care with enthusiasm, friendliness and honesty."

PrimaryPlus-Ripley will offer telehealth appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has many safety precautions in place to protect patients and their families during in-person visits. PrimaryPlus conducts telehealth appointments through a safe, secure outlet called Updox. Patients with smartphones or a computer with a camera and microphone will be able to connect with the nurse practitioner virtually and have their health needs addressed in the comfort of their own homes, including establishing care for new patients.

The school district contributed \$10,000 to the project. When in-person classes eventually resume, the new center will help keep the school district's 800 students focused on learning.

"Treating ailing students right here at school gets them back in the classroom quickly and saves parents from having to take time off work to take them to a doctor's office miles away," said James L. Wilkins II, superintendent of the RULH school district. "What's more, the RULH community now has a place to get health care close to home."

The project was made possible with more than \$300,000 in funding from Interact for Health, a private nonprofit foundation that works to improve the health of all people in Greater Cincinnati. It is the only school-based health center in the nation to open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"School-based health centers present an opportunity not only to improve the health of schoolchildren, but also provide access to health services to members of the community," said Dr. O'dell M. Owens, President and CEO of Interact for Health. "We know that people who are able to get regular health care have improved health outcomes and fewer health disparities."

PrimaryPlus-Ripley will be open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday year-round. Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance are accepted. PrimaryPlus also offers a sliding fee scale for the uninsured and underinsured, providing up to a 75% discount on care upon application approval. Beginning May 4, patients can call 937-744-4343 to make an appointment.

About PrimaryPlus

PrimaryPlus is a Federally Qualified Health Center that serves the Northeastern Kentucky and Southern Ohio population. The 35+ year organization has grown to eight locations offering a comprehensive range of medical services including family health, OB/GYN care, pediatrics, dental, pharmacy, dermatology, counseling, occupational medicine PLUS more.

About Ripley Lewis Union Huntington School District

The Ripley Lewis Union Huntington School District serves about 800 students in grades K-12 in the communities and surrounding townships of Ripley, Aberdeen and Higginsport, Ohio.

About Interact for Health

Interact for Health is improving the health of **all** people in our region. We serve as a catalyst by promoting health equity through grants, education, research, policy and engagement. To amplify the impact of our work, Interact for Health focuses on three strategic priorities: reducing tobacco use, addressing the opioid epidemic and ensuring that children have access to health care through school-based health centers. We are an independent foundation that serves 20 counties in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana.