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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Hospital District Opens Eighth School-Based Clinic in Sheldon**

HOUSTON (Oct. 27, 2006) – The Harris County Hospital District will open its eighth school-based clinic in Sheldon Elementary, near Crosby, Oct. 30.

“We were asked to expand our services into the area by the Sheldon Independent School District,” said Christina Mintner, director of HCHD’s school-based programs. “Seventy percent of Sheldon Elementary’s 515 students are economically disadvantaged, as are 79 percent of Sheldon Intermediate’s 780 students next door.”

Each school-based clinic is linked with an HCHD Community Health Center and staffed with an advanced practice nurse, a licensed vocational nurse, and a clinical clerical specialist.

The school districts absorb the cost of electricity, telephone lines, and clinic space. In return, the school-based clinics provide a wealth of services to children who otherwise wouldn’t have convenient access to health care. These services include well child exams, family education, evaluation and treatment of minor acute and chronic health problems, referrals, pharmacy services, basic lab procedures, vision/hearing screening, and immunizations.

“This clinic is the largest of all our school-based clinics,” said Mintner. “It has 3,000 square feet, and the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Authority has agreed to maintain a fully functioning clinic inside the space, which will also enable children to access help for a variety of mental health and developmental needs.”

“Sheldon ISD is excited about the new school-based clinic, because our district is located outside the city limits of Houston in a rural setting. That severely limits our access to medical care,” said Sheldon ISD Superintendent G. Steve Mills, Ed.D. “We have no doctors, no health clinics and no pharmacies in the area. Our partnership with the Harris County Hospital District enables us to make our two-year dream of a clinic inside one of our schools a reality.”

The first HCHD school-based clinic was established in 1994. Today, HCHD operates eight permanent school-based clinics in conjunction with six independent school districts in Harris County. In fiscal year 2006, the school-based clinics provided 48,100 patient services.

The Harris County Hospital District is the public health care system for the nation’s third most populous county. It provides more than 1.1 million health care visits each year to uninsured and underinsured residents of Harris County. The district operates three hospitals, 12 community health centers, a dental center, eight school-based clinics, 13 homeless shelter clinics and four mobile health units.

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