



Chronic Absenteeism Linked to Overall Student Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kannapolis, N.C. – Cabarrus Health Alliance, December 5, 2025 – Regular school attendance is essential to supporting both the academic success and overall well-being of students. When children miss school, the consequences extend far beyond falling behind in coursework. Schools provide access to nutritious meals, routine health and vision screenings, social connections, counseling services, and daily physical activity that supports long-term health.

Local education and health leaders are working to raise awareness about chronic absenteeism and the effect it has on students' academic progress and health. Chronic absenteeism is when a student misses 10% or more of the school year, which translates to 18 days missed per school year or two days per month. These missed days may result from excused or unexcused absences, as well as suspensions and can have an effect as early as preschool and kindergarten.

“Preparing for school the evening prior can save valuable time in the morning and help decrease stress and anxiety,” shared John Basilice, Director of Student Services at Kannapolis City Schools. “It is also helpful for families to have a support network and back-up system if children miss the bus or regular transportation is compromised,” Basilice added.

Healthcare providers emphasize that attending school regularly plays an important role in establishing strong social and emotional foundations for children. “Regular school attendance is crucial in developing a sense of connection for students, and feeling like peers and other adults care for them,” shared CHA’s Medical Director, Dr. Megan Easterday. “Data has shown that this sense of connection leads to improved mental health of our children, and a reduction in their chances of engaging in risky behaviors, including substance use,” added Dr. Easterday.

To help address absenteeism, local agencies are collaborating to reduce barriers that prevent students from coming to school consistently. This work includes strengthening communication between schools and families, offering wraparound support for students with chronic illness or behavioral health needs, and assisting families with transportation or housing challenges when necessary.

“Supporting student attendance takes all of us,” shared Cabarrus County School Social Worker, Nikki Steele. “Our schools partner with families and community providers to remove barriers that keep students from coming to school.”

Parents, caregivers, and community members play a vital role in this effort by maintaining open communication with schools, establishing reliable morning and evening routines, and reinforcing the importance of attendance with their children.

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About Cabarrus Health Alliance: Cabarrus Health Alliance is the public health authority of Cabarrus County. Cabarrus Health Alliance is an autonomous organization providing services and programs to meet public health needs. Cabarrus Health Alliance is a leader in public health and is nationally recognized for its innovation.

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