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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Kingsport City Schools among the first in the state to pilot a new
“telemedicine health service;” partnership with Holston Medical
Group makes pilot possible**

KINGSPORT, Tenn. – With an understanding that children learn best and improve academic achievement with fewer days out of the classroom due to illness, **Kingsport City Schools** is piloting a new “**telemedicine health service,**” making it among the first school districts in Tennessee to utilize mobile telemedicine stations in school-based clinics.

“We are excited to partner with Holston Medical Group to provide such an innovative service,” said **KCS Superintendent Dr. Lyle Ailshie**. “We know that access to quality health care can be difficult and is vital to the wellbeing of our students. The telemedicine program will assist our students and families in maintaining good health and the ability to maximize learning in the classroom.”

The new service, slated to begin the week of **Sept. 9, 2013**, is made possible by a unique partnership between **Kingsport City Schools** and **Holston Medical Group (HMG)**, in which HMG is providing a full-time, certified pediatric nurse practitioner to serve within the three pilot schools: **Ross N. Robinson Middle School, John Sevier Middle School** and **Dobyns-Bennett High School**.

“Just as technology transforms the ways in which children learn, it’s now transforming the ways in which they have access to needed medical care,” says **HMG President & CEO Scott R. Fowler, MD, JD**. “HMG is pleased to serve an active role in this new initiative that benefits children and parents alike.”

Telemedicine, or the use of secure, information and communications technology to provide healthcare at a distance, is quickly emerging as a tangible way to expand the ability of schools to meet the healthcare needs of children. In total, the Kingsport City Schools serves more than

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7,000 students, making it well positioned to fill the gaps in healthcare that many children face. Here's how the service will work. If a child becomes ill while at school, he or she will be sent to the school nurse, just as in the past. The school nurse will then follow protocol for notifying parents/guardians and determining if a telemedicine health visit would be in the best interest of the child. It is important to note that only children who are enrolled in the telemedicine health service will be eligible to receive this advanced level of school-based care.

"The local school nurse is the backbone of this service," says **HMG pediatrician Richard Gendron, MD**, who also serves as HMG vice president & quality chairman. "They're on the front lines of care as the student's first contact. As such, we count it a privilege to work alongside them, augmenting the level of care students are able to receive."

Following coordination by the school nurse, the evaluation with the HMG nurse practitioner will be conducted either in person, or via the mobile telemedicine station. (The nurse practitioner will rotate throughout the three schools, being onsite periodically throughout the week. When not on location, the health visit will be conducted via the mobile telemedicine station in each school-based clinic.)

Additionally, parents/guardians will have the option of being present for the evaluation in the school based clinic. Parents/guardians unable to participate in the evaluation will receive timely follow-up communication regarding the child's medical evaluation and treatment, and notice of any prescriptions to be picked-up at the pharmacy.

It is expected that the vast majority of the acute illnesses treated will be fevers, sore throats, rashes and respiratory conditions. Additionally, strep and flu testing will also be available onsite.

"The implementation of the telemedicine program will greatly compliment the health services currently offered throughout Kingsport City Schools," said **KCS Director of Nursing Vicki Johnston**. "We are excited to offer this service to our students and look forward to the partnerships created by the HMG nurse practitioner and our KCS school nurses."

While a payment will not be due at the time of service, the visit will be filed with the student's insurance. Parents/guardians will then receive a statement from HMG for the remaining balance. Most insurances will be accepted. For a full listing participating insurances, please visit www.k12k.com.

In addition to early intervention for acute illnesses resulting in a healthier student population and improved school performance, additional anticipated benefits of the telemedicine program include:

- Improved management of chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, etc.
- Improved health education of children & families.
- Increased education, training and support of school staff.
- Increased opportunity for the school nurse to meet the healthcare needs of the students.
- Fewer missed days of school for children and fewer missed days of work for parents.
- A more cost-effective, efficient use of resources.

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Holston Medical Group has selected board certified pediatric nurse practitioner Jenny Height, CPNP, to serve as the school-based, telemedicine provider.

With more than a decade of dedicated pediatric experience, in both outpatient and inpatient settings, Ms. Height greatly enjoys caring for children and adolescents and is experienced in everything from acute childhood illnesses to the management of chronic diseases in children. "I knew in nursing school, from my very first rotation, that I wanted to work with children," says **Ms. Height**. "I love every stage of life, from little ones to adolescents. It's amazing to watch them grow."

With a bachelor of science in nursing from the **Medical College of Georgia, Athens**, Ms. Height received her masters of science in nursing from the **University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston**, graduating with a 4.0 GPA. She is certified by the **Pediatric Nursing Certification Board**.

For more information about the new telemedicine pilot or for a detailed listing of answers to the most frequently asked questions, please visit www.k12k.com.

About Holston Medical Group

As one of the largest multi-specialty provider groups within the southeast, HMG is also the state's first multi-specialty NCQA-Level III patient-centered medical home. HMG's "Family of Care" consists of more than 800 employees, including over 150 physicians and mid-level providers in its provision of 24-hour medical/surgical coverage. Regarded as a national leader in clinical research, as well as electronic health record integration and utilization, Holston Medical Group provides convenient locations throughout Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia, offering two Urgent Care Clinics (Bristol & Kingsport) and state-of-the-art diagnostic capabilities. In addition to being the region's most advanced primary care provider (family/internal medicine, pediatrics/adolescent medicine), Holston Medical Group's provision of multi-specialty care includes: allergic diseases; endocrinology and metabolism; gastroenterology; general surgery; hospital team; orthopedic surgery; oral and maxillofacial surgery; obstetrics & gynecology; otolaryngology; occupational medicine; palliative care; pediatric gastroenterology; rheumatology; and comprehensive physical therapy and rehabilitation services. On-site ancillary services available include digital x-ray and mammography, CT, MRI, ultrasound and cardiac services. Additionally, HMG provides the patient convenience of on-site laboratory services.

Kingsport City Schools is a public school system located in **Kingsport, Tenn.**, serving students in Sullivan and Hawkins county. The district is comprised of 13 schools, including a Pre-K, eight elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school and an alternative school; with total enrollment reaching 6,500 students. The vision of Kingsport City Schools is to be, **Student Focused ... World Class**.

For more information on **Kingsport City Schools (KCS)**, visit k12k.com, listen live on, **WCSK 90.3 FM, The Voice of KCS**, watch **KCS Today** on Charter **Channel 16** at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. or call **(423) 378.2100**. We're social too; follow us on Facebook, [Kingsport City Schools](https://www.facebook.com/KingsportCitySchools) and on Twitter, [@KptSchools](https://twitter.com/KptSchools).

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