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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ELLENVILLE/WAWARSING HEALTHMATCH CAMPAIGN CLOSE TO GOAL!**

Ellenville, NY—In May of this year, Catskill-Hudson Area Health Education Center (CHAHEC) and the Ellenville/Wawarsing community came together to publically launch the Ellenville/Wawarsing HealthMatch project, a community-based economic development program to help recruit and retain healthcare providers for this southwest Ulster County community. Just four short months later, this collaboration is now close to meeting its fundraising goal, having raised \$183,125 of its \$200,000 target to develop a community-based healthcare provider recruitment incentive program.

Equally important, HealthMatch has brought three new healthcare providers to the Ellenville/Wawarsing community.

Ann Andola, MD contracted with HealthMatch to be her recruiter. Kathryn Reed, Executive Director of HealthMatch, encouraged Dr. Andola to apply for a position at the Eastern Correctional Facility in Napanoch. It has turned out to be a good match for Dr. Andola, who is now a part-time physician at the facility and an economic benefit to the area, since the Eastern Correctional Facility is one of the area's larger employers.

After Denise Smithem, an adult nurse practitioner (ANP), completed a clinical rotation at Ellenville Regional Hospital, the hospital's CEO, Steven Kelley, who is also a HealthMatch Development Council member, approached Denise about opportunities with The Institute for Family Health: Family Health Center of Ellenville. With encouragement from Kelley, Smithem is now working as an adult nurse practitioner with the Health Center and also on the coverage schedule at Ellenville Regional Hospital. Ms. Smithem will also be completing additional training in pediatrics over the next year toward certification as a family nurse practitioner. She will benefit from the community-based recruitment incentive program as a scholarship recipient for this additional education.

Recently, HealthMatch contacted Chaya Levine, a family nurse practitioner (FNP) specializing in caring for young families, to encourage her to apply for a position at the Family Health Center of Ellenville, affiliated with The Institute for Family Health, which is also a HealthMatch project partner. "When I first spoke with Kathryn Reed, it didn't feel like it was an interview. It felt more like speaking with a friend" said Levine. "She strongly encouraged me to pursue a position at the Family Health Center. The area has a genuine need for women's health practitioners, especially in the area of adolescent gynecology. It's a good fit for my credentials and experience and I love it here."

Ellenville Regional Hospital is one of several hospitals in New York State that credentials nurse practitioners to both admit and follow patients in the hospital. In fact, at Ellenville Regional Hospital, the President of the Medical Staff is a nurse practitioner and all the providers affiliated with the hospital work together to bring the best medical care available to its patients.

**MORE**

## HEALTHMATCH CAMPAIGN CLOSE TO GOAL—2-2-2

“This community is unique in its commitment to bringing quality healthcare to this region,” said Kathryn Reed. “As a critical access hospital in an underserved, geographically isolated region of the state, Ellenville Regional Hospital has developed a unique approach to credentialing its nurse practitioners that is encouraging the growth of a strong base of providers for the hospital. HealthMatch and its partners are working hard to find innovative ways to attract qualified healthcare professionals to this and other underserved communities in New York State.”

The HealthMatch primary care provider incentive program includes grants to help pay for medical school costs; low interest loans to help with medical practice start-up expenses; practice management assistance; and real estate rent reduction leases in exchange for long-term service commitments to the community. More than 15,000 prospective primary care providers have been contacted thus far.

For Ellenville/Wawarsing, the return on investment will be improved community-based healthcare, higher paying jobs for healthcare providers and support staff, a healthier community workforce, and a renewed sense of commitment derived from working together to improve overall community health.

Ellenville/Wawarsing HealthMatch is a demonstration project funded in part by a grant from the New York State Department of Health to help raise the Ellenville/Wawarsing area to health and economic stability. The success of this initial demonstration project will be replicated across HealthMatch’s 11-county service area.

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*HealthMatch is a service of Catskill Hudson AHEC. Catskill Hudson AHEC is devoted to improving the quality, geographic distribution and retention of healthcare professionals and to stimulate interest in health professions careers through education throughout its 11-county service area. The counties Catskill Hudson AHEC serves are Columbia, Delaware, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Otsego, Putnam, Rockland, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster. For information on Catskill Hudson AHEC, visit [www.chahec.org](http://www.chahec.org).*