



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wolf Administration Launches Partnership with Non-Profit Vision To Learn, Celebrates Students Receiving No-Cost Vision Screenings and Eyeglasses

York, PA - Department of Human Services (DHS) Acting Secretary Meg Snead and Pennsylvania Department of Education Special Assistant to the Acting Secretary David Volkman today visited Hannah Penn K-8 school to participate in a ceremony for students receiving free eyeglasses through a partnership with DHS and the non-profit, Vision To Learn. This event kicked off a new partnership that leverages federal Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) funding and private philanthropic donations to provide essential vision screenings for students at schools in lower income communities covered by Vision To Learn.

Access to vision exams and eyeglasses is critical to promoting positive educational achievements and health outcomes, as 80 percent of all learning during a child's first 12 years is visual. Pennsylvania children and families in lower income communities may experience different barriers to accessing essential services and health screenings.

"Providing children with the glasses they need to feel comfortable moving through life every day is vital to their success in the classroom and beyond," said DHS Acting Secretary Meg Snead. "Today marks a new day for many students who can now see the board or clearly read a book for the first time, and I am grateful to the federal government for allowing us to use CHIP to support this important work."

DHS's partnership with Vision To Learn aims to reduce barriers to health care and success in education by providing students with initial vision screenings, eye exams, and, if needed, eye glasses at no cost. Vision To Learn operates mobile vision screening clinics, bringing screenings and exams to children at school, and replacement glasses are covered as long as the prescription remains up-to-date. Before this event, students completed eye exams and selected their new frames at the school using Vision To Learn's mobile clinic.

This partnership utilizes federal funding available through CHIP, which is administered in Pennsylvania by DHS, as well as private philanthropic funding. DHS was approved by the federal government to support this partnership as a Health Services Initiative (HSI), which allows states to use a portion of their CHIP funding to support community public health work. The HSI utilizes no state budget dollars and helps reimburse the cost for

children covered by CHIP to receive eye care and eyeglasses and will help Vision To Learn expand its footprint in Pennsylvania.

Vision To Learn is a nonprofit charity that provides children at schools in low-income communities across the country with free vision screenings, eye exams, and glasses. The program brings licensed optometrists to school sites, easing barriers to care that would otherwise prevent many children from getting the glasses they need to succeed in school and in life. Founded in 2012 by Austin Beutner, Vision To Learn has provided about two million students with vision screenings, more than 400,000 with eye exams, and 325,000 with glasses, in 14 states and the District of Columbia.

“This effort in Pennsylvania which taps unused federal dollars to help kids is a model for the nation,” said Beutner. “Every child, in every school, everywhere in the country should have the glasses they need to succeed in school and in life.”

The Children’s Health Insurance Program provides high-quality, low-to-no-cost health insurance for children up to age 19, and no family makes too much to purchase insurance through CHIP. Learn more about CHIP coverage at www.chipcoverspakids.com.

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