

# Health centers kick off 5th year at high schools

PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

**PORT TOWNSEND** — School-Based Health Centers have started their fifth year of service at Port Townsend and Chimacum high schools.

"We know that being able to access health care at school helps students obtain care that they otherwise would not have received," said Jefferson County Public Health Director Jean Baldwin.

The centers are a medical partnership between Jefferson County Public Health and Jefferson Healthcare.

The centers offer a range of services that include sports physicals, immunizations, family planning and other health issues addressed by primary care.

"The centers are here so that we can support stu-

dents to be healthy because we know that healthy students are better learners," said family nurse practitioner Susan O'Brien.

"These services are provided with the same confidentiality as your doctor's office."

## Ongoing project

The centers are an ongoing community project between the school districts, medical providers, mental health and providers to improve the lives of high school students.

Families without health insurance are connected with Apple Health, free or low-cost health care coverage offered in the state.

Mental health needs are addressed through counselors from Jefferson

Mental Health.

Services are funded by the Hargrove Mental Health local sales tax funds and available in the two School-Based Health Centers and a community clinic in Quilcene.

## Senior requirements

Port Townsend High and Chimacum High students have utilized the centers as a resource for their senior project requirements.

The centers are also a host for one of Jefferson County's AmeriCorps volunteers.

Ryann McChesney, a recent graduate of Oberlin College with a degree in neuroscience, will be spending the next year in Jefferson County working for the centers.



School-Based Health Centers are now in their fifth year at Port Townsend and Chimacum high schools. Staff at the centers includes, from left, nurse practitioner Susan O'Brien, counselor Julie Canterbury, nurse practitioner Sarah Kirkegaard and AmeriCorps volunteer Ryann McChesney.

P.D.N.