



City of New Bedford  
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford  
Office of the Mayor  
Contact: Elizabeth Treadup Pio  
(508) 979-1410  
[etreadup@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:etreadup@newbedford-ma.gov)

Date: October 1, 2014  
For Immediate Release

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Health Department, Mayor's Office and School Department Unveil New *Health Access Kids!* Program on Child Health Day**

**New Bedford, Massachusetts** – On Monday, October 6, 2014 the New Bedford Health Department, in partnership with New Bedford Public Schools and the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center celebrated Child Health Day and introduced a new health insurance program: *Health Access Kids New Bedford* at Carney Academy Elementary School

Although every child is entitled to health insurance, as many as one-quarter of New Bedford residents are not insured at any given time. Many families may be unaware that they must re-enroll on an annual basis or their health insurance coverage will lapse. This new program, Health Access Kids New Bedford, will educate families on the importance of health insurance, increase health insurance coverage for students and families, help families to stay enrolled, and improve the ability to track insurance status for all New Bedford students and families.

Mayor Jon Mitchell read a proclamation of health in honor of Child Health Day. "Health coverage is important to maintaining good health and to keeping our students ready to learn. Children who have health insurance spend more time in school, and this can result in higher levels of academic achievement." said Mayor Mitchell.

"Like car insurance which you get before you get in an accident, health insurance is something you should get before you get sick and need to go to the doctor or emergency room," said Health Department Director Brenda Weis.

The New Bedford Health Department, the School Department, and the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center's partnership is one of eight partnerships throughout the country that won an award from the National League of Cities, a philanthropy, to launch the *Health Access Kids* program. The National League of Cities' overall goal is for families to "reduce emergency room visits, avoid crushing health care costs and have healthier children who perform better in school."

Today's event was just the beginning of the *Health Access Kids* campaign. Along with handing out pencils and stickers, students received information about the campaign to bring home to their parents. Concurrently, advertisements will be placed inside several SRTA buses, on the back of buses, and at bus shelters. The Health Department also plans to disseminate information at the Community Health Center and other local venues to let residents know how to get additional information and enrollment assistance.

If you are interested in learning more about this program or need help enrolling in insurance, please call the New Bedford Health Department at 508-991-6199 ext. 114, or you can email [healthaccesskids@gmail.com](mailto:healthaccesskids@gmail.com). You can also visit the program's website <http://healthaccesskids.org> to learn more.

The New Bedford Health Department is committed to promoting and protecting the health of New Bedford residents by upholding important regulations and implementing innovative health and wellness programming.

###

*Find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/CityofNewBedford](http://www.facebook.com/CityofNewBedford) and  
Twitter [www.twitter.com/NewBedford\\_MA](http://www.twitter.com/NewBedford_MA)!*