

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 29, 2020

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Heartland Community Health Center
Robyn Coventon, Chief Executive Officer
(785) 841-7297 ext. 205 OR (405) 635-5694

Panda Pediatrics
Lucas Houk, Practice Administrator
(785) 842-4477

HEARTLAND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER & PANDA PEDIATRICS ANNOUNCE MERGER

Heartland Community Health Center and Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, PA, dba Panda Pediatrics, would like to announce that the two organizations have signed a definitive agreement and will merge operations in January 2021. In a decision inspired by a shared vision to expand capacity for accessible integrated pediatric and adolescent health care in and around the community, Panda Pediatrics has agreed to merge their staff and assets into Heartland's. The anticipated result is a more unified community health access point with robust resources and staffing to support comprehensive and integrated services.

The two organizations announced an exploratory process and intent to merge back in September 2019. They now target January 2021 for the close of the acquisition and the transfer of staff, services, and assets to Heartland, which will include Panda's 6th St. clinic. Heartland's current expansion project, conveniently located very near Panda's office and slated for completion in the fall of 2021, will continue as planned and Panda's services will remain at the 6th St. clinic location. Neither organization anticipates any disruptions to patient care.

"We are excited to be a part of a project that will allow us to serve our current patients, Douglas County and surrounding counties in ways that neither practice could have done independently. The future of integrated and comprehensive healthcare from birth through adulthood for all is exciting and we are pleased to be partnering with Heartland on the leading edge of that change in our community." - Lucas Houk, CMPE, Panda Pediatrics Practice Administrator

Heartland and Panda had been actively engaged in evaluation of a possible merge since 2019. "Our mission, to welcome all who need care, is perfectly aligned with the merger of these two organizations who have been committed to the health of our community for years," stated Devon Haase Kim, Heartland Community Health Center Board Chair. "For many of us, Panda Pediatrics is where we went as children and where we now take our children, so to come full circle while expanding our local safety net is a huge victory for our community - right now and for many generations to follow."

Heartland's status as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) allows them to leverage federal dollars to provide services with less reliance on state and local funding, thereby creating a more sustainable and quality-driven business model that expands capacity for the insured and uninsured, alike. It was this model that led the organizations to make a joint decision to be merged to accomplish their shared goals in the community.

The two organizations have served the same community with models based on affordable, accessible health care for a combined nearly 60 years.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with Heartland, the health of our community is about to level up in a fantastic way. Our passion at Panda Pediatrics is preventative healthcare and partnering with Heartland allows us to expand significantly and reach more pediatric and adolescent patients,” stated Dr. Waco Goodnight, pediatric provider at Panda.

The mission and vision of the combined organization will emphasize the two’s shared principals of inclusivity, accessibility, efficiency, integration, quality health care, and positive outcomes. Also included is a focus on innovative approaches aimed at enhancing pediatric and adolescent health care for the community at large.

“In collaborating, partnering, and dreaming together, Heartland Community Health Center and Panda Pediatrics will continue to honor the legacy Panda brings in being the pediatric provider of choice for Douglas County for the past forty plus years, and we will continue to honor Heartland’s mission of providing comprehensive, integrated care for all in our community,” said Robyn Coventon, Chief Executive Officer at Heartland Community Health Center. “Our role as the Community’s Health Center is only strengthened by the addition of the high quality, trusted care Panda has been providing for years.”

Moving forward, Ms. Coventon will remain in her position as Heartland CEO. Mr. Houk will serve as a transition leader throughout the merge process and remain as Panda Pediatrics Practice Administrator along with enhanced duties as Chief Administrative Officer at Heartland moving forward.

Heartland Community Health Center serves Douglas County and surrounding areas with primary care, behavioral health care, psychiatry, dental care, and physical therapy, along with assistance programs and wrap-around services. Services are available to all, regardless of income or insurance status. In addition to its designation as an FQHC, Heartland is also a Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), a model that emphasizes patient accessibility, as well as coordinated, compassionate and integrated care to ensure that all needs are met.

Panda Pediatrics has been the primary pediatric and adolescent health care provider to all of Douglas County since 1977. Panda Pediatrics strives to provide the highest possible quality of care for patients up to 21 years of age, and Panda is currently a partnership of six board-certified pediatric care providers who take this mission to heart. Panda has won the "Best of Lawrence" community vote since 2013, as well as 2018’s Winnie Family Favorites awards. Panda is also a 5-star Kansas Breastfeeding Friendly Practice. The practice offers prenatal visits, well check visits, sick visits, a walk-in clinic, and extended hours. Panda has a physician on call 24-hours-a-day and a nurse triage line for clinical questions. Currently, Panda is affiliated with LMH Health, where we deliver well newborn care to patients.

www.heartlandhealth.org

www.pandaped.com

###