



\$130,000 grant to put more mental health providers in Madison County area schools

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By **Crystal Bonvillian, The Huntsville Times**



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HUNTSVILLE, Alabama -- Six more public schools in the Huntsville area will see master's level therapists on site this fall to provide better access to mental health care.

Expansion of the county's **School Based Mental Health Program** comes through a \$130,000 grant from **Huntsville Hospital's Community Health Initiative**.

The money will put an additional three therapists in the schools, said Michael Andrews, manager of the school-based program for the Nova Center. The **Nova Center**, a division of the Mental Health Center of Madison County, provides services for children and adolescents.

Huntsville schools that will now have access to therapists are Chapman P-8 and Whitesburg P-8, as well as Highlands, Lakewood, McDonnell and Montview elementary schools. In Madison, Mill Creek Elementary will also have a therapist available this year.

Last school year, 319 children who would not ordinarily have had access to such mental health care were provided services through the school-based program, Andrews said.

"Less than 20 percent of the children who need mental health care actually receive it, largely due to access," Andrews said. "So going to the child where they are helps to eliminate that problem."

Twelve schools already have therapists provided by the Nova Center, Andrews said. In Huntsville, those are Martin Luther King Jr., Morris, Rolling Hills and University Place elementary schools.

In Madison, Columbia, Madison and West Madison elementaries and Bob Jones High School have therapists. In the county system, Madison County, Madison Crossroads and New Hope elementary schools are on that list.

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