

TO MEDIA:

CONTACT PERSON: Robin Jennings

Marketing and Communications

Excelsa Health

724-689-0206 TEL

724-516-4483 CELL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Parent Dana Petrunak; 5th grader Ethan Sobota; Jennifer Miele, Excelsa Health Vice President of Marketing and Communications; 4th grader Jeffrey Jones; 6th grader Terese Milalcin and principal J. Kevin Frye use the new hand hygiene station in the cafeteria at Christ the Divine Teacher School in Latrobe. Excelsa Health provided the dispenser and antiseptic hand wipes to the school to promote community wellness.

SCHOOL'S HAND HYGIENE STATION PART OF EXCELA HEALTH'S COMMUNITY WELLNESS PROMOTION INITIATIVES

LATROBE, PA, April 2, 2012 ... Dana Petrunak's 10-year-old son, Connor, knows the importance of hand hygiene to keep germs at bay. His mother, a nursing supervisor at Excelsa Health Latrobe Hospital, stresses handwashing with the family including husband, Ron and 6-year-old Camden, as well as the patients in her care.

Thanks to the Petrunaks and Excelsa Health, the 200 students in their school, Christ The Divine Teacher in Latrobe, now have a permanent hand hygiene station in the cafeteria so everyone has the opportunity to clean their hands before mealtime.

While soap and water are always preferable for hand cleaning, antibacterial gels and antiseptic wipes are also appropriate to stop the spread of infection. Connor Petrunak, now a 4th grader, carries gel in his lunchbox, and the classrooms have it as well, thanks to parent donations. But the time constraints during the school day can mean not every child will be able to wash up in the restroom before lunch. That's why Dana Petrunak consulted with Excelsa Health infection preventionist JoAnn Grote to determine a good alternative. The result:

a cafeteria dispenser filled with antiseptic hand wipes provided by the health system.

Since illness is easily spread among school children, CDT principal J. Kevin Frye is hopeful the new hygiene station will be an effective tool in guarding against absenteeism. Thus far, attendance is up, although a mild winter and low incidence of flu in the area are also contributors.

“I’m concerned about the health of all the children, not just mine,” said Dana Petrunak. “Kids can bring home all kinds of germs from school and the playground. When we keep them well, our community is healthier, too.”

To learn more about Excelsa Health’s community wellness initiatives, visit www.excelahealth.org or contact Excelsa Health’s Call Center, toll free, 1-877-771-1234.