



[Mobile Health Van brings services to western Franklin County](#)

By Madison Schofield, Staff Writer, The Greenfield Recorder Published: 10-27-2025

BUCKLAND — A new partnership between the Community Health Center of Franklin County, the Mary Lyon Foundation and the Mohawk Trail Regional School District has led to a mobile doctor's office for area patients.

"We can do just about anything that happens in the office in the van," said Dr. Allison van der Velden, CEO of the Community Health Center of Franklin County, a nonprofit with offices in Greenfield, Turners Falls and Orange. "Patients will get the same high-quality care in the van as in the office."

The center's Mobile Health Van will set up shop in the school's parking lot for one week each month and spend a few days offering health services to western Franklin County residents. This week, the van will offer a COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinic on Wednesday, and preventative care, sick visits and chronic disease management appointments on Thursday and Friday. Participants must register in advance.

"They'll be offering services to anybody who wants to sign up for an appointment. As long as they register to become a patient with the Community Health Center, they can be seen for a sick visit or for ongoing care," said Kristen Tillona-Baker, CEO of the Mary Lyon Foundation. "It's a full-service van with a physician in the van."

Tillona-Baker said the initiative is one she's "really excited" about because health care options in western Franklin County are limited. A long-term goal for the foundation is to establish a brick-and-mortar community center, where its offices and other community services will be housed, including health care services. But for now, the van will increase opportunities for residents to access health care if they are unable to travel to Greenfield, Northampton or other areas with doctors' offices.

"One of our strategic plan goals was to offer comprehensive wrap-around services to students and families, and the van coming to West County is a start," Tillona-Baker said.

Van der Velden said expanding health care options in the western part of the county had also been a goal for the Community Health Center, so she was excited about the partnership with the school and the Mary Lyon Foundation.

"The health center has had health care access in West County on our radar for a long time," van der Velden said. "We've been really concerned about the inadequate and declining health care options in West County."

Mohawk Trail Regional School is a central location that is well-known to residents. Van der Velden said working with the school for it to be a location for the Mobile Health Van was "a natural

connection.” With 20- to 40-minute appointment options, the van’s physician can see approximately 11 patients each day.

In future months, the Community Health Center hopes to bring dental care and behavioral health services to West County using the van. Van der Velden said the center plans to do outreach and study the specific health care needs of the area’s residents and adjust what is offered through the van in the future.

“We won’t have a pharmacy on the truck, but we may be able to do procedures like pap smears if we’re prepared for it,” van der Velden said. “It’s all health care.”

The Community Health Center accepts most insurance plans and works with the state’s Health Safety Net Program to cover some services for uninsured individuals. Van der Velden said the center can also offer out-of-pocket payments and a sliding-scale discount as “a last resort” for patients who need help affording health care.

“We always accept Medicare and Medicaid, and for folks who don’t have health insurance, we have staff who can help them navigate their options,” van der Velden said.

Van der Velden added that appointments will still be available at the health center’s offices, and the Mobile Health Van is just one more way to access health care.

“The idea is that health care should be accessible,” van der Velden said. “We’re here for everybody.”

For more information or to register as a patient, visit chcfc.org.

[Correction, October 28, 2025 11:00 am:](#)

An earlier version of this story included photo captions that incorrectly identified Tanya Poulos, insurance outreach and enrollment coordinator with the Franklin County Community Health Center.

Source: <https://recorder.com/2025/10/27/mobile-health-van-at-mohawk/>