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PEDIATRICIANS PROMOTE LITERACY

-- Reach Out and Read Literacy Program Introduced at MANA's Northwest Arkansas Pediatric Clinic --

FAYETTEVILLE, April 2, 2009 -- Getting books from the doctor will soon be a routine part of regular pediatric checkups at MANA's Northwest Arkansas Pediatric Clinic Wellness Center as doctors and nurses welcome the "Reach Out and Read" program to the practice.

Northwest Arkansas Pediatric Clinic joins more than 4,121 programs nationally that are working to make books part of a healthy childhood. Reach Out and Read is a simple, yet highly effective concept. Pediatricians educate parents about the importance of reading with their children every day. At every regular checkup between the ages of 6 months and 5 years, each child receives a new, age-appropriate book to take home and keep.

"Giving a book to a young child, along with age-appropriate advice about sharing books for the parents, may be the only concrete activity a pediatrician can routinely do to promote child development," commented Barry S. Zuckerman, M.D., co-founder of Reach Out and Read and Chief of Pediatrics at Boston University School of Medicine. Medical research supports that claim, showing that literacy promoted by pediatricians has a significant effect on parental behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes toward reading aloud. For more than a decade, studies have indicated that parents who get books and literacy counseling from their doctors and nurses are more likely to read to their young children, read to them more often, and provide more books in the home. In addition, several studies have shown improvements in the language scores of young children receiving Reach Out and Read.

"We are so excited to bring Reach Out and Read to Northwest Arkansas," said Dr. Stacy Furlow, director of the program at MANA's Northwest Arkansas Pediatric Clinic.

“Promoting literacy in early childhood helps ensure a successful future for our community’s children.”

For more information about Reach Out and Read Arkansas at MANA’s Northwest Arkansas Pediatric Clinic or if you would like to donate funds or volunteer as a reader, please contact Marilyn Tate at 479-442-7322 or visit our web site at www.mana.md.

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a national, non-profit program that is working to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care, so that children grow up with books and a love of reading. ROR trains doctors and nurses to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and to give books to children at pediatric checkups from 6 months to 5 years of age, with a special focus on children growing up in poverty. This year ROR will provide more than 5.7 million books to more than 3.5 million children, at over 4,121 programs throughout the country. Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read Arkansas has affiliated with this national coalition in pediatric literacy and health since March of 2008. In a very short time, 18 clinical locations have now signed on using the ROR Model, having given out 55,000 books reaching over 31,500 children.

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Dr. Stacy Furlow gives books to Colin, Rose and Clara Green, the first family to participate in Reach Out and Read at MANA’s Northwest Arkansas Pediatric Clinic.