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**COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE PROGRAM  
FOR TREATING CHRONIC DISEASES**

**CHC one of the first health centers in the nation to replicate the Project ECHO model  
to expand access to care for its patients**

**Middletown, CT (January 20, 2012):** Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) launched today a state of the art, evidence based program – CHC Project ECHO™ Hepatitis C/HIV. CHC is one of the first community health centers in the nation to replicate the ECHO model. Project ECHO™ (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) is a model developed by the University of New Mexico initially to extend Hepatitis C care and management to the rural clinics. This innovative, hi-tech program uses video-conferencing, electronic health records, disease management, and case-based learning to expand access to specialty care for underserved patients. The purpose is to provide specialist support and education to help primary care teams manage cases that would otherwise be referred out to specialists.

“We are very excited to be offering this innovation at CHC which will allow us to offer specialized treatment to patients across the state, many of whom do not have access to such treatment otherwise. In many communities there are few specialists willing to accept patient without insurance or with state funded Medicaid insurance.” explained Dr. Marwan Haddad, Medical Director of HIV, HCV, and Buprenorphine Services.

Currently, CHC offers HIV and Hepatitis C management and treatment as part of primary care at New Britain, Meriden, and Middletown. Through CHC Project ECHO™, HIV/Hepatitis C care will now be offered at additional sites across Connecticut including Bristol, Norwalk, Waterbury, Enfield, Clinton, and New London via weekly video-conferencing sessions.

One provider at each site will attend the weekly sessions with the CHC HIV/Hepatitis C faculty team, which is comprised of medical, psychiatric, and pharmacy experts. At these sessions, the providers will present cases from their local panels and will receive advice and direction on how to manage and treat these patients. Providers will learn from the case presentations as well as from HIV and Hepatitis C educational sessions during the weekly meetings. The goal of Project ECHO is to develop an expert in HIV and Hepatitis C care at every CHC site so that patients who suffer from these illnesses have one patient-centered medical home they can access for all their care.

During the kick-off session, five new patients with either HIV or Hep-C were presented by providers across the agency. The CHC HIV/Hepatitis C faculty team heard each case and used

the electronic health record to review patient details. The faculty team then reviewed the important aspects of each case with the provider and made recommendations for treatment and further management.

“Our mission is not just to provide health care, but to ensure that the care we provide is the best it can be and is what best meets the needs of our communities and patients,” explained Dr. Daren Anderson, Vice President and Chief Quality Officer at Community Health Center, Inc. “Our health care system and communities are constantly evolving and presenting us with new challenges. To be a world class primary care organization, we are constantly transforming ourselves to reflect these changing needs. Project ECHO will allow us to do just that.”

Integrating this program into CHC’s model of care will eventually allow the organization to expand access to care for other diseases, like diabetes, asthma and chronic pain management.

“At Community Health Center, Inc. we dedicate ourselves to taking care of special populations. Nowhere is that better evidenced than in today’s merger of our technological and intellectual platforms,” said Mark Masselli, President and CEO at CHC. “Today we saw the result of months of hard work and research come together in perfect harmony. This truly is the future of healthcare.”

This CHC Project ECHO™ Hepatitis C/HIV program is funded in part by a grant from The Mayday Fund and Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc., in support of the Hep-C Circle of Care program.

**About Community Health Center, Inc.**

Since 1972, Community Health Center, Inc. has been one of the leading healthcare providers in the state of Connecticut, building a world-class primary health care system committed to caring for uninsured and underserved populations. CHC is focused on improving health outcomes for its more than 130,000 patients, as well as building healthy communities. Currently, CHC delivers service in 201 locations statewide, offering primary care in medicine, dentistry and behavioral health services. For more information, visit [chc1.com](http://chc1.com).

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