

# CHC knocks Rell budget

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MIDDLETOWN — The Community Health Center blasted Gov. M. Jodi Rell's latest budget proposal calling it

"a prescription for sickness"

President and Chief Executive Officer Mark Masselli made the comments Tuesday through a press release after an in-depth review by CHC staff members.

Masselli said he has issues with three aspects of the budget: the 10 percent reduction in overall funding for community health centers, the establishment of a \$3 copayment for certain medical services and the elimination

of medical eligibility for legal immigrants.

Masselli said the reduction in spending is a "bell curve with no end in sight on the down side of the curve."

He referred to the copayment as "draconian" and was supported by Dr. Daren Anderson, a practicing internist at CHC's new Britain office as well as

See CHC, Page A8

## CHC

From Page A1  
CHC's medical director.

"We saw what happened last year when the general assistance population had to make copays," said Anderson through the release. "People simply do not get the medicines or the pharmacy ends up eating the cost of the copay."

As for legal immigrants, Clinical Director Margaret Flinter warned that the proposal would double the number of uninsured pregnant patients at the center.

"These women are preparing to give birth to a generation of U.S. citizens," said Flinter. "It makes no sense to create barriers to receiving prenatal care, which is strongly associated with a healthy birth outcome."

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Masselli said, even though his comments may be critical of the governor, it is all part of the process to get the best budget possible.

"Our goal is to be partners with the state of Connecticut, not adversaries. We are experts in caring for people, who have big problems and very small incomes," said Masselli. "We can bring great value to the state by working with them to ensure that each health-care dollar spent on Medicaid and on the uninsured is a dollar wisely spent. That is our goal here, and we hope the governor will take us up on that offer."

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