

# Dental Clinic Expected To Open in September

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A dental services clinic for low-income families is expected to be up and running at the Ben Franklin Center by the beginning of September.

During its July 26 meeting, the Common Council unanimously approved an agreement with Community Health Center, Inc. of Middletown to lease and operate a pediatric and family dental/oral health clinic at the center, 125 Flax Hill Road.

The clinic "will serve to increase access and to deliver pediatric and family dental/oral health services, particularly to the low-income and publicly insured population of children in Norwalk," according to a memorandum from Alan Lo, the building and facilities manager, to Mayor Alex Knopp and the council.

The clinic will be staffed by a licensed hygienist who will provide dental hygiene exams, fluoride treatments, prophylaxis and oral hygiene instruction, and by a caseworker, who will work with parents on obtaining consent forms, follow-up treatment needs, scheduling, and assisting with the state's Healthcare for Uninsured Kids and Youth program and CHC fee applications. CHC has a sliding fee scale for uninsured children, the memo states. During the council meeting, CHC President and Chief Executive Officer Mark Masselli said no patients will be turned away for their inability to pay.

"There is a crisis in Norwalk and throughout Connecticut in dental health care for children and relatives of the working poor and for those living in poverty," Knopp said in a press release announcing the clinic. "Children especially are not getting the preventive dental care of regular exams and cleanings or even treatment of cavities and other oral hygiene that they need."

Under the lease agreement, CHC is responsible for providing pediatric and family dental services for three years, with the option to extend the lease for another three years. The Ben Franklin Center serves children in

Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now's Head Start and other school-readiness programs. National Head Start guidelines require that each child receive a dental checkup within three months of his or her entry into the program, Knopp said.

In November 2004, the Head Start review report found that the Norwalk program was not in compliance with that requirement, Knopp said. Of the 257 children enrolled in the local Head Start program, 63 percent had expired dental exams.

The city is offering the space for \$1 per year. Some dental equipment already has been moved in, and Masselli said the remainder is expected to arrive within the next two weeks.

A Norwalk advisory board will be created to provide input on the operation of the clinic, which will be funded by compensation from Medicaid and the HUSKY program, from grants and from other third-party sources.

The clinic initially will be open two days a week, but the hours of operation will expand from there, Masselli said. The days of operation will be announced at a later date, he said.

Council member Douglas Hempstead, R-District D, requested that eventually the hours of operation be extended to evenings and Saturday mornings as well as weekdays.



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Earlier this year, members of Boy Scout Troop 19 of Norwalk on a high-adventure trip to the Adirondacks in New York. The boys and adults visited Howe Caverns, the Baseball Hall of Fame and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Research Station on White Face Mountain. The high of the trip was a day of whitewater rafting on the Indian and Hudson River. The contingent also climbed Mount Arab and the Olympic Training Center in Lake Placid. The troop meets at United Methodist Church on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. In the boat at rear, Doug, the owner and guide for Wild Waters Outdoor Center in Warrensburg, N.Y.; in front row, Joe DeAngelis, Carson DeAngelis, David Morales and Chris Mulford; and in back row Greta DeAngelis, Jim Schepflin, Sean DeAngelis and Ben Trowbridge. At the fire tower at Mount Arab at left, are, front row Mulford, Richard Morales, Evan Robbins, David Morales and DeAngelis; second row, Dylan Sodaro, Carson DeAngelis, Sean DeAngelis and Greta DeAngelis; and third row, Mike Carney and Tim Carney.



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