

## Innovations at Work



Shown above: In the top two photos, CHC clinical staff participate in a weekly Project ECHO video-conference with specialists at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine. Center photo, a patient has a digital image of his eye taken with the diabetic retinopathy (DR) camera. Next, clinical staff review images from the DR camera. Lastly, CHC staff lead a HRSA webinar on Health IT.

## CHC's New Breakthrough Programs Improve Patient Outcomes

Through telemedicine, Connecticut's underserved patients now have access to the top doctor opinions they need. In August, Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) launched Project ECHO, developed by specialists at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine to reach underserved, rural populations in New Mexico with complex health problems such as hepatitis C virus infection. Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) uses video conferencing technology and state of the art electronic health records to offer health centers expert guidance when treating this serious illness.

Twenty-four organizations, including CHC and various health centers, clinics, rural hospitals and Indian health service providers, now team with the UNM specialists to improve patient care. CHC, the first health center in Connecticut to join the project, hopes to build upon the ECHO model and enhance delivery of expert care to patients with a variety of complex health problems. "This is a very exciting project that addresses a major need in our health system," explained **Dr. Daren Anderson**, VP/Chief Quality Officer at CHC. "Even in a non-rural state like Connecticut, there simply aren't enough specialists willing to see underserved patients. As a result, wait times to get into specialty care are long, and many patients don't receive the care they need in time. Project ECHO gives us the ability to provide that care to our patients.

On a similar front, CHC recently reported improved diabetic retinopathy (DR) screening rates through a statewide telemedicine program. The leading cause of acquired blindness in U.S. adults, DR is a growing epidemic affecting more than 20 million Americans of all ages, gender and race. Though early detection prevents progression, screening rates are only 10% in medically underserved populations.

This telemedicine program, launched in 2009 and conducted in partnership with the Yale Eye Center/Department of Ophthalmology, used digital imaging technology in CHC's 12 primary care centers to screen underserved and at-risk patients for DR. Along with increased screening compliance and streamlined specialist referrals, retinal screening rates doubled within the target population. And while 25% of those patients had some level of existing retinopathy, only 13% required specialist referral, thus also demonstrating the program's cost-saving efficiencies.

For more information about Project ECHO, visit [echo.unm.edu](http://echo.unm.edu) and [www.chc1.com](http://www.chc1.com). To read the full DR screening study, published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, see the *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* (Volume 22, Number 3, August 2011).

## CHC Experts Present a National Webinar on Health IT

Recognized by HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) as a leader in the use of health information technology, Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) was invited to speak at HRSA's Health Information Technology and Quality Webinar in July. **Dr. Margaret Flinter**, APRN, PhD, VP and CHC Clinical Director, **Dr. Nwando Olayiwola**, Chief Medical Officer and **Dr. Daren Andersen**, VP, Chief Quality Officer, represented CHC.

The webinar focused on how safety net providers, such as health centers and rural providers, can generate quality reports and utilize data for improving healthcare outcomes. During the webinar, which had one of the largest audiences in HRSA's history, the CHC team demonstrated how health IT is used to inform and engage patients in their care decisions, and improve health quality and outcomes. Other essential points covered by the team included:

- How to use data to drive quality improvement and the importance of making data easily accessible to teams within the organization.
- Why provider performance feedback is a critical component to continued improvement of clinical objectives as well as how feedback can be structured to balance quality and efficiency goals.
- How using a web-based program such as Sharepoint allows data to be easily accessed and understood by health center staff.
- And most importantly, why multiple data sources must be collected and analyzed to drive performance and sustain gains, and why front line staff must be centrally involved in the process of data collection and reporting.

The full webinar can be accessed at [www.hrsa.gov/healthit](http://www.hrsa.gov/healthit).

# CHC Learns About Regulation Amendment to Help Home-Bound Medicare Patients



Shown above, clockwise from top left: Mark Masselli and Rep. Joe Courtney discuss legislative issues. Margaret Flinter introduces Rep. Joe Courtney. CHC Leadership team welcomes Rep. Joe Courtney. Rep. Joe Courtney addresses audience on home health care legislation.

## CHC supports regulation amendment to help home-bound Medicare patients

Under current Social Security law, a patient of a nurse practitioner or other non-physician provider must first be seen by a physician before obtaining home health care services. Yet, besides being a hardship for these home-bound elderly and/or disabled patients, often the physician repeats the same tasks already performed by the non-physician provider, a duplication of work and waste of scarce health care resources. Connecticut Congressman **Joe Courtney** is a strong supporter for amending Title XVII of the Social Security Act to remove barriers to timely home health care for Medicare enrollees.

At the invitation of **Dr. Bernadette Thomas**, nurse practitioner and on-site medical director of the Community Health Center of Clinton, Congressman Courtney joined CHC clinical teams from around the organization to discuss access barriers placed on nurse practitioners and, together, voice support for amending the current regulations governing the ordering of home health care services for Medicare patients.

**Dr. Nwando Olayiwola**, CHC Chief Medical Officer, explained:

*“Our nurse practitioners are the primary providers for many elderly patients—they know the patients and know their needs. It is not rational for them to have to go and get an order from a physician who may not know the patient at all. It wastes time and resources, and is inconsistent with our patient-centered model.”*

According to MedPAC, 65.4% of nurse practitioners are also primary care providers. This percentage exceeds all other practitioners who furnish primary care services. Allowing nurse practitioners to order their own patient’s care services will streamline access to care for thousands of elderly, disabled and other home-bound patients throughout the state.

The Congressman encouraged all those attending the discussion to tell their legislators their reasons for amending Title XVII. “This is a bipartisan bill; it’s not a budget buster,” he explained. “Hopefully we can make the case that it, in fact, makes the (health care) system more efficient, and gives it strength and value.”

You can view the full discussion on [www.chc1.com](http://www.chc1.com).

# CHC Brings Leaders from Health Centers Across the Country to Discuss Best Practices in Health Care

In July, CEOs and top medical staff from community health centers across the country gathered to discuss best practices, current events, advances and changes in the health care industry. Each year a different health center hosts the well-attended forum and this year Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) participated for the first time. During the three-day event, guests enjoyed Mohegan Sun’s exciting amenities, savored a New England-style lobster bake at Mystic Seaport, and delighted in the Goodspeed Opera House’s iconic performance of *Showboat*.

Renowned presenters included **Lee Aase**, Director, the Mayo Clinic Center for Social Media; **Richard Bettini**, President and CEO, Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center; **Marjorie Godfrey**, MS, RN, Co-Director, The Clinical Microsystem Resource Group, Instructor, The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice; **Keven Carpenter**, Quality Leader, GE Capital, Americas; **Dan Cave**, President and CEO, Nurtur; and **Lisa Savage**, Director of Human Resources, Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic.

Thought-provoking topics included:

- Bringing the Social Media Revolution to Health Care: The Practice, Promises and Pitfalls
- The Evolution of Online Medical Forums and Personal Health Records—How MedHelp Has Pioneered Mobile Healthcare
- The Process of Transformation, Learning from the Best: GE’s Approach to Quality Improvement; the Change Acceleration Process
- Employee Wellness Programs: Encouraging Healthy Behaviors, Promoting Healthier Workplaces and Improving Productivity

In his remarks, CHC CEO and President **Mark Masselli** explained how, like other Best Practices Forum participants, CHC “aspires to build a world class primary health care system that serves special populations, focuses on improved patient outcomes and builds healthy communities. We are here because we wanted to be a part of this transformational organization, and make a difference in the neighborhoods we live in and the communities we serve.”

To view presentations and discussion sessions go to [www.chc1.com/Transformational/BestPracticesForum](http://www.chc1.com/Transformational/BestPracticesForum).



Shown above, clockwise from top left: Mark Masselli addresses the audience during a general session. CEOs engaged in a roundtable discussion. Guests attended general sessions covering health care related topics. Bottom photo, pictured from left to right, top row: Mark Masselli, President/CEO, CHC; Michael Beaudry, Quality Leader, Lending Originations, GE Capital; Keven Carpenter, Quality Leader, GE Capital; Bobby Love, Quality Leader, Corporate Finance, GE Capital; Dr. Margaret Flinter, Senior VP/Clinical Director, CHC; Dr. Daren Anderson, VP/Chief Quality Officer, CHC. Seated: Adele Gordon, Site Director for CHC Fairfield County Sites; Doreen Bentson, Quality Master Black Belt, GE Capital; and Linda Velez, Developing Health —CHC Site Leader.

# CHC Provides Dental Care for Hundreds of Veterans During Annual “Stand Down” Event

For sixteen years now, needy and homeless veterans have relied on the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs annual “Stand Down” event for essential services, assistance and information they need—all free—from federal agencies, and local businesses and organizations like Community Health Care, Inc. (CHC). This year more than 900 veterans participated in the September 9th Stand Down at the State Veterans Home Rocky Hill campus, and more than 500 vets passed through CHC’s tent.

CHC staff members, including **Dr. Margaret Drozdowski Maule**, Dental Director, assisted more than 200 veterans with oral cancer screenings, dental cleanings and restorative procedures. CHC primary care providers, behavioral health providers and Access to Care staff were available to answer questions about CHC and the comprehensive services we offer at our 12 statewide sites; 30 vets took advantage of our free behavioral health screenings.

“Stand Down has become a proud Connecticut tradition and I believe it is our state at its finest,” **Commissioner Linda Schwartz**, RN, FAAN said. “Stand Down is a place where needy and homeless veterans can receive the help that they need. Where else in Connecticut can you go to court to get a case settled, get your license renewed, get a haircut, get your teeth cleaned and get an eye examination all in the same day?”



Shown above, top row: CHC’s Dental Service Center. Middle row: CHC staff greet and register vets; A vet gets a dental cleaning. Bottom row: CHC clinicians providing dental services.

# CHC Applauds Its Four New Nurse Practitioner Residency Graduates



Shown above, from left to right: Dr. Margaret Flinter, Senior VP/Clinical Director; Anna Olivier, APRN, NP-R; Dr. Nwando Olayiwola, Chief Medical Officer; Kristie Quarles, APRN, NP-R; Kerry Bamrick, Senior Program Manager; Hao Pham, APRN, NP-R; Martha Trevey, APRN, NP-R.

**Anna Olivier, Martha Trevey, Kristie Quarles and Hao Pham**—Community Health Care, Inc.’s (CHC) four new nurse practitioner residency graduates—were honored for their achievements the evening of August 27th. Sixty-five well-wishers were on hand to congratulate the graduates, including providers and preceptors of the residency program who worked closely with the graduates over the last 12 months, and the graduates’ families, who travelled from South Carolina, Chicago, Vermont and Massachusetts.

**Dr. Nwando Olayiwola**, CHC Chief Medical Officer, **Dr. Dan Wilensky**, Family Practice Physician and Meriden preceptor and **Dr. Ovanes Borgonos**, New Britain on-site medical director and preceptor shared heartening stories about the young women, who in turn reflected on their experiences. The graduating residents—all licensed as advanced practice registered nurses and board certified as family nurse practitioners—were then each presented with a certificate of completion and a beautiful crystal engraved award from Tiffany’s.

Festivities concluded with a special video appearance by **Dr. Loretta Ford**, founder of the nurse practitioner role and movement, from her home in Florida. She reminded the graduates, all now practicing at CHC, that “it’s better to live one day as a tiger than one thousand years as a sheep.”

To learn more about CHC’s Nurse Practitioner Residency Program, please visit [www.chc1.com/Transformational/NPRP](http://www.chc1.com/Transformational/NPRP).



**Building a WORLD-CLASS PRIMARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM focused on special populations.** Community Health Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency. Since 1972, we have been building a world-class primary health care system, that is committed to caring for special populations, and that is focused on improving health outcomes for our patients as well as building healthy communities.



**Community  
Health Center, Inc.**

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## Healthy Change

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FALL 2011

## Celebrating America's Health Centers: Serving Locally, Leading Nationally

**CHC marked National Health Center Week 2011 with community health fairs at locations throughout Connecticut**

A bright spot in America's health care system, health centers serve more than 23 million people at 8,000 sites nationwide and are on track to expand care to 40 million people in the next five years. With more health care homes in communities nationwide, our country can reduce health care costs, unnecessary hospitalizations and visits to the hospital emergency rooms, plus save taxpayer dollars. **This is what National Health Center Week celebrates!**

Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) marked the occasion each day, August 7–13, by hosting free, family-friendly health fairs at farmers markets and CHC locations throughout the state. The fairs included immunization, blood pressure and dental screenings; information about Medicaid, early detection and WIC programs; diabetes education; nutrition counseling and FUN! Folks young and old enjoyed face painting, raffle prizes, music, Recess Rocks™ demonstrations, dunk tanks and popcorn—and, in New London, even got to meet Dora the Explorer and SpongeBob Squarepants.

"Every day in our primary care centers I witness the value of having a health care home," said **Mark Masselli**, president and CEO of CHC, Inc. "When people have a place to go for regular care, they use it and stay healthier. Our primary care, pediatric, pharmacy, dental and behavioral health services; obstetrics, prenatal and women's health services, lactation support and counseling; nutrition counseling and certified diabetes education; HIV treatment and support services; and assistance with public insurance program applications give patients the care they need under one roof. And patients are treated as individuals, with dignity and respect. This is what health care should be, and what we celebrate during National Health Center Week."



Shown above, clockwise from top left: Yoga demonstration at the Middletown Health Fair. CHC's staff volunteered their time at the fairs. Children being entertained by a clown. A scene from the Middletown Health Fair. CHC clinicians provided free blood pressure screenings and information.