

"The need for access to primary care services continues to grow across the state, particularly among the uninsured and underinsured. CHC has positioned itself to be responsive to this critical need with this new site, which allows us to increase access to care for Waterbury's residents through CHC's model of high-level, responsive, team-based primary care."

—Dr. Nwando Olayiwola
Community Health Center, Inc.
Chief Medical Director

CHC Waterbury Celebrates Grand Opening

On December 9th, Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) celebrated the grand opening of its newest site, in the heart of downtown Waterbury, CT. Community members toured the center during an open house event which featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony and remarks by Mayor Neil O'Leary and Rep. Chris Donovan.

The \$1.2M project consisted of a renovation of the former St. Mary's Family Health Center, located at 51 North Elm Street, and includes state-of-the-art medical exam rooms, a behavioral health group room and a dental hygiene room. Ten full-time and one part-time employee—including three primary care providers, two medical assistants, one dental hygienist, one psychologist and one psychiatric nurse practitioner—offer comprehensive primary medical, behavioral health and dental hygiene services for all ages, plus help with applications for public insurance and other support programs. CHC hopes that bringing this elevated level of care into the Brass City will aid in reducing the number of emergency department visits at the cities' two hospitals.

CHC is recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) as a Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH), which is a team-based model of care led by a personal physician who provides continuous and coordinated care throughout a patient's lifetime to maximize health outcomes. PCMH's are held to a set of standards that require them to be innovative and constantly working to improve care for their patients. CHC is the only Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in the state with this recognition.

Below, top row from left to right: the conference room; visitors to the open house gather in the lobby for a facility tour; a medical exam room. Bottom row from left to right: Margaret Flinter introduces CHC staff; Rep. Chris Donovan, CHC site director Yvette Highsmith-Francis, Mayor O'Leary, Margaret Flinter, CHC senior VP and clinical director, Mark Masselli, CHC president and CEO, and CHC access to care coordinator Brenda Lopez cut the ribbon.



Recess Rocks® theme song debuts at America's Children's Holiday Parade in Oakland, CA

More than 100,000 spectators of all ages cheered their favorite stars and characters—including Miss Rosa®, the Cat in the Hat®, Madeline®, Sid the Science Kid®, Clifford the Big Red Dog®, Arthur® and the Peanuts Gang®—at the 12th annual Oakland, CA kids holiday parade held December 3rd, as tap dancing trees, floats, giant balloons, marching bands and more swept the air with holiday excitement.

Mr. Steve, the beloved PBS Kids® personality behind SteveSongs®, introduced the new Recess Rocks theme song on his "Aloha Float" while the Oakland Youth Chorus' grade K-5 troubadours sang and danced to his music all along the parade route. The parade aired on PBS stations December 24 to 26 across the nation.

Pictured at left, PBS Kids® star Mr. Steve of SteveSongs® performs the Recess Rocks theme song on the PBS Kids® float during America's Children's Holiday Parade in Oakland, CA.



CHC Enhances Diabetic Patient Care and Education During National Diabetes Awareness Month



CHC staff hosted Diabetes Day where patients were taught how to prepare healthy meals to help control their diabetes.

During National Diabetes Awareness month last November, Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) led the way among federally qualified health centers (FQHC) in Connecticut in diagnosing diabetic retinopathy among at-risk patients, and help patients better understand and manage their diabetes.

Diabetic retinopathy preventative screening improves patient outcomes

Diabetes prevalence is expected to double or triple in the next few decades, with one-third of U.S. adults expected to have diabetes by 2050. People living with diabetes are at risk for developing three eye diseases: diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and glaucoma. If left untreated, these diseases can cause blurred vision, bleeding in the eyes and blindness; in fact, diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of adult acquired blindness in the United States, affecting more than 20 million Americans of all ages, gender and race.

While progression of diabetic retinopathy can be slowed or halted, vision that has been lost cannot be regained. Therefore, it is crucial for all individuals with diabetes to receive screening for diabetic eye diseases regularly. Early detection prevents progression yet screening rates are only 10% in medically underserved populations.

As previously reported CHC achieved improved diabetic retinopathy (DR) screening rates through a statewide telemedicine program. Led by Dr. Nwando Olayiwola, MD, MPH, FAAFP, CHC Chief Medical Officer and Family Physician, and launched in 2009 in partnership with the Yale Eye Center/Department of Ophthalmology, CHC used digital imaging technology in its 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.

"This study provides foundational insights on how best to apply a patient-centered medical home model to an established medical problem, using technology, team-based care and patient education," noted Dr. Olayiwola. **"Fortunately, a program with such important clinical implications has also demonstrated its cost efficacy,"** she added.

Findings of the study were published August 2011 by the Johns Hopkins University Press' *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, October 2, 2011 by the American Diabetes Association's *Diabetes Spectrum*, and will soon be published in Connecticut State Medical Society's *Connecticut Medicine*.

Free diabetes education program serves up information and tips

Some of the biggest hurdles that diabetic patients face include managing their medication and meal planning. In recognition of Diabetes Awareness Month, CHC hosted fun, educational events at its Meriden and New Britain facilities on November 18th to help patients and their friends and families learn more about diabetes, get their questions answered and discover how to create easy, healthy meals.

"A patient with diabetes requires comprehensive care, including medical follow-up, pharmacological therapy, routine lab work, immunizations and preventative care screenings," explained Dr. Olayiwola. **"Patient education and understanding of the impact diabetes has on one's life is critical to care. The goal of this event is to provide patients with the opportunity to learn more about the management of diabetes, focusing on medication adherence and dietary options."**

During the event, CHC staff used cooking demonstrations and delicious food samples to dispel the myth that having diabetes means a life sentence of dull meals. A pharmacist answered diabetes medication questions and, to keep spirits light, prizes were awarded throughout the day.

Kudos For Our Dedicated Staff



Dr. Marwan Haddad, MD, MPH

Marwan, family practice physician and CHC's Medical Director for HIV, Hepatitis C, and Subaxone programs, received the Primary Care Leadership Award at the 4th Annual Primary Care Summit, which was hosted on November 3rd, by the Connecticut Center for Primary Care and the Primary Care Coalition of Connecticut. In his current role as Medical Director of the HIV program, he provides comprehensive care to his HIV, Hepatitis C and opioid dependent patients while mentoring other members of the CHC staff who also treat patients with these conditions. As a result of Dr. Haddad's dedication, affected CHC patients boast clinical outcomes that exceed national benchmarks, particularly in the arena of HIV care.

CHC—Building Healthy Communities

Building healthy communities throughout Connecticut drives our mission, and offering free educational and service oriented events helps bring our message to those who need it most. Here's a sample of the many events Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) sponsored in the past few months.

CHC Honors Patients, Friends and Loved Ones Stricken with Aids

Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) marked **World AIDS Day** with an evening ceremony at Riverview Plaza on Main Street in Middletown. CHC staff, patients and caring community members gathered for a candlelight vigil and procession to honor those who lost their battle with HIV/AIDS in 2011 and those living with the affliction.

"The Clothesline Project" and "Walk in Our Footsteps" Heighten Awareness of Domestic Violence

Despite great advances in public awareness and legal support, one out of four women experience violence, injury and even death at the hands of an intimate partner. To mark Domestic Violence Awareness Month last October, New Horizons Domestic Violence Shelter, CHC's 24/7 emergency shelter for women and children fleeing domestic abuse, hosted two displays in front of the CHC of Middletown Behavioral Health Building: **The Clothesline Project**, shirts decorated by abused women to express their emotions, and **Walk in Our Footsteps**, 65 pairs of children's shoes displayed to reveal the number of area children affected in the last year.



Service and Candlelight Vigil Held on National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day

Homeless residents who passed away in 2011 were remembered with a candlelight vigil and memorial service on the longest night of the year last December. Homeless individuals and community leaders spoke at the event, held at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Middletown, CT and co-hosted by Community Health Center's W.Y.A. (Wherever You Are) Health Care for the Homeless program and by St. Vincent's of Middletown.

Homeless Connect in Danbury Event Lightens Load of Adult and Children

CHC provided dental cleanings and high blood pressure screenings at the **Homeless Connect** in Danbury last December. CHC volunteers met 70 new faces and with additional donations from GE, gave away tooth brushes, tooth paste, mouth wash, dental floss, hats, scarves, gloves and other necessities to participating guests.

Community Health Center, Inc.

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.



Dr. Nwando Olayiwola, MD, CMO

Nwando, CHC's Chief Medical Officer, has been named a "100 Buckeyes You Should Know" by her alma mater, The Ohio State University. The list features alumni that demonstrate significant levels of professional achievement, civic leadership or cultural influence. Dr. Mark Notestine, executive director of the Ohio State University Medical Center's Office of Alumni Affairs, wrote of Dr. Olayiwola, "She could be described by any of the following: caring physician, medical executive, research scientist, author, and emerging leader."



**Community
Health Center, Inc.**

635 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MIDDLETOWN, CT
PERMIT No. 64

Healthy Change

Inside this issue:

- CHC Waterbury Celebrates Grand Opening
- Recess Rocks™ Theme Song Debuts at America's Children's Holiday Parade in Oakland, CA
- CHC Enhances Diabetic Patient Care and Education During National Diabetes Awareness Month
- Kudos For Our Dedicated Staff
- CHC—Building Healthy Communities
- "Atripla 5 Years, 5 Heroes" Contest Recognizes Heroes in Fight Against HIV



WINTER 2012

Scan for
more info

Contest Recognizes Heroes in Fight Against HIV

Many individuals help fight HIV in their communities every day, but often do not receive the recognition they deserve. They are the case workers who helped someone through a difficult time, the doctors who taught their patients how to take care of their health, and the family members or friends of people living with HIV who are inspirational.

— Bristol-Myers Squibb

To recognize these unsung heroes, Bristol-Myers Squibb launched the "Atripla: 5 Years, 5 Heroes" contest last June to mark the fifth anniversary of Atripla, the 1-pill only HIV regimen. Five individuals who made a significant difference in the fight against HIV within the past five years were then selected by an independent panel of judges and honored during a dinner in Chicago in November 2011.

Among the heroes was **Maria Lorenzo**, a Community Health Center, Inc. HIV Medical Case Manager. Lorenzo and her compatriots will soon have their stories featured in a video documentary and receive an all-expenses paid trip to New York City in March 2012 for a red carpet screening of the film.

The **ATRIPLA**
5 YEARS
5 HEROES
CONTEST

CHC Salutes Maria Lorenzo, a Steadfast Hero in the Battle Against HIV

As one of Maria Lorenzo's patients explained:

"I would tell a friend that there are people in the world who are right where they are meant to be because they are so caring and so good that they have a gift to give. Maria is that person—we love her, we need her, we are better for having her as a role model. There are few people in the world who make you feel like no matter how far you fall, you can still rise again but Maria does that every day. She doesn't judge or scold you—she holds you accountable, lets you be human and holds your hand while you find your way back up. She is one of a kind and we are all better for knowing her and being guided by her."

Healthy Change

WINTER 2012 | Community Health Center, Inc.