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# Construction Starts On Community Health Center Building In Middletown

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MIDDLETOWN —

The Community Health Center began construction Monday on its new three-story, 48,000-square-foot facility on Main Street.

The building will consolidate all of Community Health Center's Middletown primary-care operations into one building. Up to 21 health care jobs will be created when the project is completed, according to the health center.

"With health reform now in effect, community health centers across the country will experience an increased demand for primary and preventive care," Mark Masselli, Community Health Center's CEO, said in a news release.

The Community Health Center provides medical, dental, behavioral health and obstetric care to area residents. It was founded in 1972, and its statewide network provides health care for more than 100,000 people.

The center in October received a \$7 million federal grant toward the project, and has also received \$2.5 million from the State Bond Commission. The rest of the \$17 million project will be funded through financing, Masselli said.

"These are challenging economic times, and community health centers like the one that will be built here in Middletown are so important. Regardless of an individual's ability to pay, community health centers are providing high-quality health care to all," U.S. Sen. Christopher Dodd said in a news release.

The building is being built on the corner of Main and Grand streets, on a city-owned parking lot. The new center will have a parking lot behind it, and will have several environmentally friendly aspects, including a "green" roof and solar panels.

Masselli said Monday that the center could be open by December 2011. He said the Community Health Center is "working with the city on parking issues."

"We're building on a model of care that's evolving all around the United States that's as patient-centered as possible," Masselli said.

He said that up to 150 people, mostly from local contractors, would be involved with the building project.

"It's going to be a great thing for the North End," said Larry McHugh, president of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. "It's going to create some jobs and become a signature building there."

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