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## **HEALTH** **CHC celebrates National Health Center week 2011**

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Middletown, CT - Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) is marking National Health Center Week 2011 (NHCW) with a series of community health fairs at our locations throughout Connecticut, as part of a weeklong campaign (August 7-13) to raise awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America's Health Centers as local solutions. The theme of this year's NHCW is "Celebrating America's Health Centers: Serving Locally, Leading Nationally," to underscore how health centers deliver a unique approach that targets health needs and saves taxpayer dollars. They are strong partnerships of people, governments and communities who work together to meet the unique and diverse health conditions of the community. Although health centers rely on a portion of federal funding, they are not a bureaucracy. In fact, they are run from the bottom up, by a patient-majority governing board who guides how limited resources can be effectively directed to meet the health care needs of the community.

One of the bright spots in America's health care system, health centers provide a health care home to over 23 million people at 8,000 sites nationwide. Politicians on both sides of the aisle have long-recognized this model of care as one of the most effective programs and have always acknowledged the value of health centers and supported their expansion. Health centers are on track to expand their care to 40 million people over the next five years. With more health care homes in communities, we can reduce health care costs and unnecessary hospitalizations and visits to the hospital emergency rooms. According to the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), there are 60 million people in the country with limited or no access to primary care providers – a trend that shows no sign of improving with the economic recession.

From its origin in 1972 as a volunteer storefront clinic in Middletown, CHC has grown into a statewide network that includes 218 points of service, including 12 main comprehensive care sites, mobile dental sites, school-based health centers, and Wherever You Are services that brings care into homeless and domestic violence shelters. CHC is currently is the largest provider of health care services to the underserved in the state with over 400,000 visits annually. Our foot print is rapidly expanding as our patient population grows and the need for comprehensive services becomes more prevalent. We are preparing to expand our Meriden location to accommodate the growing demand of that community and will celebrate the opening of the Community Health Center of Waterbury in Fall of 2011.

“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. We provide a range of services onsite – primary care services, pediatrics, pharmacy, dentistry, and behavioral health services. Other services that can be found at our centers include obstetrics, prenatal and women’s health services, lactation support and counseling, nutrition counseling, certified diabetes education, HIV treatment and support services and assistance with application for public insurance programs. Our patients not only get the care they need under one roof, but they are treated as individuals, with dignity and respect. This is what health care should be, and what we celebrate during National Health Center Week.”

CHC will celebrate National Health Center Week by hosting FREE, family-oriented health fairs at several health center locations. The fairs will include immunization screenings, blood pressure screenings, dental screenings, information about Medicaid programs, early detection programs, housing and health department information, WIC program information, diabetes education, nutrition counseling and of course, fun – face painting, raffle prizes, music, Recess Rocks demonstrations and more. Bring the whole family to one of these events:

- Wednesday, Aug. 3, 10am-2pm, CHC of New London (1 Shaw’s Cove), 860-447-8304 – Come meet Dora the Explorer and SpongeBob Squarepants!
- Saturday, Aug. 6, 11am-1pm, CHC of Danbury (8 Delay Street), 203-797-8330
- Monday, Aug. 8, 3-6pm, Day Street and Franklin Street CHC have teamed up to host a health fair at a local farmers market, Calvary Baptist Church, 21 Concord Street, Norwalk, 203-854-9292 (Day Street) or 203-969-0802 (Franklin Street)
- Tuesday, Aug. 9, 12noon – 6pm, Day Street & Franklin Street CHC’s will host a health fair at a local farmers market, Veteran’s Memorial Park, 42 Seaview Avenue, Norwalk, 203-854-9292 (Day Street) or 203-969-0802 (Franklin Street)
- Thursday, Aug. 11, 12noon-3pm, CHC of New Britain (85 Lafayette Street), 860-224-3642
- Saturday, Aug. 13, 9am – 3pm, Day Street & Franklin Street CHC’s will host a health fair at a local farmers market in downtown Stamford, corner of Bedford & Spring Streets, 203-854-9292 (Day Street) or 203-969-0802 (Franklin Street)
- Thursday, Aug. 18, 10am – 2pm, “Fun in the Sun Day” at CHC of Clinton (114 East Main Street), 860-664-0782

· Friday, Aug. 19, 11am – 2pm, CHC Middletown (635 Main Street) will host a carnival themed health fair with popcorn, snow cones, a dunk tank and more, 860-347-6971

“At Community Health Center, Inc., we believe health care is a right, not a privilege,” said Margaret Flinter, APRN, Ph.D., vice president and clinical director of CHC. “We encourage everyone to take advantage of these free events and health services and learn more about the high levels of care and programming we offer. Health education and preventative services are key components to realizing our vision of building safe, healthy communities.”

To find out more about National Health Center Week, visit [www.healthcenterweek.org](http://www.healthcenterweek.org).

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