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News

Community Health Center awarded another \$430,000

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MIDDLETOWN—A few weeks ago the city's Community Health Center received funding to expand to a new location and last Thursday it was awarded \$430,000 to offer more services to children who have no access to health care.

"This month has been filled with good news for the Community Health Center," State Sen. Len Suzio said in a statement.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently gave away \$14 million in grants nationwide. Three recipients were of the southern New England area are organizations that manage school-based health centers, one in Massachusetts and two in Connecticut.

The Community Health Center, established in 1972 in Middletown, was just one of the three recipients to receive funding.

"We started working on the grant last year," CEO of the private nonprofit, Mark Masselli, said. "We're very happy to receive it."

Masselli said the funds will go toward Woodrow Wilson Middle School and Vinal Technical High School, both of which have health facilities designed to provide medical care to the many students who are underinsured or without any insurance at all.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 11 percent of Connecticut's population- 380,000 people- don't have health insurance.

A number of those people reside in Middletown and the funding, Masselli said, will help the health centers expand, add equipment and improve their electronic records or take other measures to serve more school-aged children.

More specifically, he said, the money will allow the centers to be renovated and also afford them the opportunity to purchase new equipment like exam tables and dental chairs.

Since the two centers already provide health screening and preventive care programs, students who are sick or have chronic illnesses don't have to miss a day from school, he said.

But with this close to half a million dollar grant, Masselli said, the center will enhance their programs and services in order to "be able to make sure that children that have illnesses have access to health providers."

State Rep. Joseph Serra, D-33, said the grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is a “great thing and is raising the healthcare level for all citizens.”

“A healthy population is healthy for everyone,” Serra said. “And obviously the center is doing the job it’s supposed to do or else it wouldn’t have gotten this grant.”

He said the agency which provides primary care and social services is on the “cutting edge” in the Middlesex County area and makes certain that people of various economic statuses receive medical care.

“There’s a population out there,” Serra said, “a need for the Community Health Center.”

In the future, Masselli said, “the Community Health Center hopes to offer comprehensive primary care in every school—a full range of medical, dental and behavioral health.”

The other organizations to receive grant money were Windham Community Memorial Hospital and Hatch Hospital Corp. in Willimantic and Hilltown Community Health Centers of Worthington in Massachusetts.

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