

The New Britain Herald (newbritainherald.com), Serving New Britain, Conn., and surrounding areas

News

Health center's video effort aids 2,000 patients

Wednesday, January 25, 2012 10:53 PM EST

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NEW BRITAIN — The Community Health Center has launched a new video conference program that organizers say will benefit more than 2,000 of their patients in the state affected by Hepatitis C and HIV.

The video conference program will be used by all 13 of CHC's centers in the state, allowing each branch to connect with a Hepatitis C and HIV team of specialists every Friday during a two-hour period.

"Only three of our CHC sites — New Britain, Middletown and Meriden — have Hepatitis C and HIV specialists in them right now," said Dr. Darren Anderson, chief quality officer at CHC. "Instead of those clinics recommending their patients to outside doctors, they can now video conference and talk to our CHC specialists and pharmacists to get all sorts of advice and treatment options."

CHC is a national, nonprofit organization that provides health care for uninsured and underinsured patients in urban areas such as New Britain. It cares for about 1,600 Hepatitis C patients and 600 HIV patients in the state, according to Anderson.

The video conference program — one that will link all CHC locations together — is based off a model they discovered last July at the University of New Mexico called Project Echo.

Project Echo linked Hepatitis C and HIV specialists to primary care providers who on a weekly basis presented their patient's records through video conferencing. CHC is doing the same, as the specialists at the three locations will make recommendations and are able to prescribe medicines.

"It's very beneficial for our patients," Anderson said. "It was tough beforehand. Our uninsured or underinsured patients had a difficult time finding doctors in their areas to actually treat them."

For more information, call CHC's 85 Lafayette St. location in New Britain at (860) 224-3642.

To get tested

The Human Resources Agency of New Britain is conducting free HIV testing in honor of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Feb. 7 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at its 57 Arch St. location. For more information, call Matthew Damiano, HIV prevention counseling and testing coordinator, at (860) 826-4482.

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