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## Health center part of state-funded plan to help at-risk youth

### Community Health Center staff among groups taking part in DCF, DMHAS program

By Special to the Press

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HARTFORD >> Gov. Dannel P. Malloy has announced Connecticut will receive a \$5 million grant to better engage and connect young adults ages 16 to 25 to behavioral health care. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration awarded Connecticut the competitive five-year Seamless Transition and Recovery Opportunities through Network Growth grant to serve youth who reside in New London, Milford or Middletown and who are at risk for or have behavioral health disorders.

“These new resources will support young people living with behavioral health disorders, and help them learn to identify and appropriately cope with their issues,” said Malloy. “Early intervention is critical; and this funding enables Connecticut to reach out to young people and help them lead more productive, fulfilled lives.”

Grant activities will identify and engage young adults in formal treatment and services while ensuring that families, including natural supports beyond traditional families, are engaged and included in decisions and roles for recovery planning. An outreach campaign supported by the grant will be employed to inform people about mental illness, reduce discrimination, and provide connections to services.

“Governor Malloy and I are committed to ensuring our young people reach adulthood ready to succeed,” said Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman.

“We’ve made historic investments in education and health care, committed ourselves to initiatives to strengthen our economy, grow jobs, and bolster housing. This is another important support we can offer our youth to help them transition to independence. I applaud the governor and our state agencies who are working to bring these resources to Connecticut.”

The project will be administered by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Children and Families in collaboration with Advanced Behavioral Health.

Project staff from the Child and Family Agency of Southeastern CT (New London), Bridges (Milford) and Community Health Center (Middletown) will work with youth to ensure their successful transition to productive adult community members. DMHAS serves as the fiduciary agency, and the evaluation will be conducted by the University of Connecticut School of Social Work.

“Young people often experience symptoms of behavioral health disorders. There is clear evidence that an

early intervention approach to youth who are identified as high risk of needing mental health treatment as adults improves outcomes,” said DMHAS Commissioner Pat Rehmer.

“This grant will enable us reach out to young adults and their families in an individualized way, assisting in creating a strength-based, family-focused, gender-responsive and recovery-oriented system of care that is attentive to the culture of youth.”

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