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Pfizer Awards \$299,997 Grant to Community Health Center, Inc.'s Weitzman Institute Funds to be used to establish an online professional learning community to improve pain management and reduce prescription opioid misuse in primary care

MIDDLETOWN, Conn; December 10, 2014: Community Health Center, Inc.'s (CHC) Weitzman Institute has received a grant in the amount of \$299,997 from Pfizer's Independent Grant for Learning & Change. This funding will allow Weitzman Institute (WI) to establish an online professional learning community on chronic pain management in the primary care setting – PainNET. The goal of PainNET is directly aligned with the mission of CHC and WI; to provide the highest quality of care to medically underserved patients, and in particular to those experiencing disparities in healthcare outcomes.

Building on CHC's highly successful Project ECHO Pain - a national program using teleconferencing to train primary care providers nationwide in appropriate pain management - CHC will work with 35 participating practices from five states to develop, test and evaluate PainNET. These collaborators include Integrative Pain Center of Arizona, along with practices from Maine, Delaware, Arizona, Connecticut, and New Jersey.

Leveraging the newest thinking in healthcare delivery and education, PainNET will feature collaborative, multidisciplinary communication and shared learning. Providers can obtain answers to clinical questions from experts, interact with providers from other disciplines to develop care plans, gain access to learning modules, and find resources to help implement best practices in pain care. The project will develop a virtual community connected via the PainNET web platform, committed to improved care for patients with chronic pain.

Dr. Daren Anderson, CHC's VP/Chief Quality Officer and Director of the Weitzman Institute, emphasized the importance of inter-professional communication by adding that "few primary care providers still round in hospitals and increased pressure for productivity limits opportunities for telephone consultation and case discussions. PainNET will capitalize on well-established online tools to foster such communication in an asynchronous, highly efficient manner. The goal is to create a forum through which providers can ask questions, post ideas, and interact with a range of specialists through online discussion forums, chats, and direct email communication."

Substantial disparities have been documented in the quality of and access to pain care for members of racial and ethnic minorities. PainNET is intended to enhance access to evidence-based pain management for such patients by building the capacity of federally qualified health centers and safety net practices to provide high quality pain care.

"There is a need for system-level interventions to support care teams and ensure adherence to best practices," said Mark Masselli, President and CEO of CHC. "The PainNET intervention will capitalize on the expertise and experience of CHC's Weitzman Institute (WI) with quality improvement interventions to improve pain management outcomes."

About Community Health Center, Inc.

Since 1972, Community Health Center, Inc. has been one of the leading healthcare providers in the state of Connecticut, building a world-class primary health care system committed to caring for uninsured and underserved populations. CHC is focused on improving health outcomes for its more than 130,000 patients as well as building healthy communities. Recognized as both a Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home by the National Committee for Quality Assurance and a Primary Care Medical Home by The Joint

Commission, CHC delivers service in more than 200 locations statewide, offering primary care in medical, dental and behavioral health services. For more information, visit www.chc1.com.

About The Weitzman Institute

The Weitzman Institute is the first community-based research center established by a Federally Qualified Health Center, dedicated to quality improvement and research in primary care for the underserved. The Institute tests promising innovations in primary care delivery and establishes research priorities for Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC). For more information about Weitzman Institute visit quality.chc1.com.

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