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CHC's Masselli and Anderson Address Primary Care Improvement at International Conference

MIDDLETOWN, CT, September 22, 2014: Community Health Center, Inc.'s (CHC) President and CEO, Mark Masselli, and VP/Chief Quality Officer, and Director of CHC's Weitzman Institute, Dr. Daren Anderson, were invited to give presentations on their expertise of primary care innovation as part of the first-ever convening of the Global ECHO Community in Albuquerque, New Mexico, September 11-13.

Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) started as an intervention to improve access to Hepatitis C treatment in rural New Mexico. It has now transformed into an international model for strengthening primary care and improving outcomes for underserved patients with a wide range of conditions. CHC's Weitzman Institute has successfully replicated this program and holds weekly ECHO sessions for the treatment of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and chronic pain, as well as a session dedicated to integrating Buprenorphine maintenance treatment in primary care.

The 3-day conference titled "A New Norm for Healthcare: The First Convening of the Global ECHO Community," was held in Albuquerque, NM, and brought together "ECHOists" from 22 states and six countries to share best practices, and to explore emerging issues.

Mark Masselli delivered a TED-style talk focusing on CHC's involvement as one of the first ten sites – and the first federally qualified health center (FQHC) - to successfully replicate the telehealth program, originally created by the University of New Mexico. "We see Project ECHO as a tool to bring vitality back to primary care. It's a way to create a culture of change - for making ongoing improvement part of how we do business," Masselli said during his talk.

Dr. Anderson participated as part of a panel of speakers comprised of early adopters of the ECHO model. The panel discussed methods for innovating and spreading ECHO to make it available to larger numbers of providers, and how to best evaluate the outcomes.

"Our work at the Weitzman Institute focused on developing, studying, and refining the ECHO model received national and international attention in Albuquerque," said Daren Anderson. "We are working to turn ECHO into a comprehensive platform for primary care redesign. It was extremely exciting to present and be a part of this historic gathering."

The talks spurred conversations among decision makers from organizations like GE, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Permanent, the Brookings Institute, and others, on how Project ECHO can be adapted to spark organizational change.

More information about CHC's ECHO programs can be found by visiting quality.chc1.com.

About The Weitzman Institute

The Weitzman Institute was established in 2013 by the Community Health Center, Inc., and is named in honor of Jerry Weitzman, a community pharmacist, one of CHC's founders, and a long-time board member. Located in Middletown, CT, the Center promotes innovations in quality improvement techniques as well as critical investigation in primary care and systems redesign. Research and improvement work at the institute are focused on areas that have direct implications on the day to day practice of primary care for medically underserved patients. For more information, visit quality.chc1.com.

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.

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