

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Community Health Center, Inc. Receives \$250,000 Under the Affordable Care Act to Bolster Behavioral Health Services

### *Pilot Program to Launch at CHC's New Britain, Meriden and New London Sites*

**New Britain, CT, August 6, 2014:** Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) has been awarded \$250,000 in funding under the Affordable Care Act as part of an initiative designed to support health centers in establishing or strengthening their behavioral health services. CHC will use these funds towards advancing the agency to a fully integrated care model, and to implement the SBIRT model of early intervention and treatment services for people with substance use disorders. A pilot program will be tested at CHC's New Britain, Meriden and New London sites.

"This funding will allow us to implement a pilot program focused on strengthening our behavioral health services across the agency; further reducing the barriers that prevent people from getting the treatment they need for mental health issues," explained David Guggenheim, PsyD., Associate Chief Behavioral Health Officer for Community Health Center.

The SBIRT model, developed by the US Department of Health & Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), consists of three components: screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment. CHC's goal for using this model is to reduce rates of substance abuse and depression within each of the communities it serves.

As part of the pilot program, all patients who are seen at one of the participating CHC sites will be screened by medical staff using SBIRT, for alcohol abuse, substance abuse and depression to determine underlying health issues that require further follow-up. Coupled with CHC's use of the immediate care ("warm hand-off") model, patients who screen positive for use disorders and depression can be seen immediately by a CHC behavioral health provider. Added screenings will also allow our behavioral health providers to refer patients with very complex needs to higher levels of care as-needed.

"CHC is one of the nation's largest and most innovative Federally Qualified Health Centers. We are leaders in developing an integrated primary care model, which relies on talented and dedicated staff, supported by strong analytic data sets," said Mark Masselli, President and CEO of Community Health Center, Inc. "We have developed a high touch and high tech delivery model and these funds will allow us to build upon that."

#### **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](http://www.chc1.com).

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