



## our mission

*Community Health Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency providing primary health care and social services. Its quality health care services are available to all, and particularly to those who cannot gain access to such services elsewhere. The Community Health Center, Inc. takes leadership in promoting interagency cooperation. It is based on consumer control and is committed to ensuring human rights and respecting human dignity; as such, it strives to be a voice and vehicle for social change.*

# WINTER '10 NEWSLETTER

## Community Health Center of Danbury Leads National Cambodian-American Town Hall Meeting

The Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) of Danbury was the host of a nationwide video teleconference of a Cambodian-American town hall meeting on health-care issues. The meeting held on December 2, 2009 included a keynote address and discussion with Dr. Lim Keuky, an internationally known scientist and expert on diabetes, who is the founder and director of the Cambodian Diabetes Association. He spoke in person from the CHC of Danbury offices at 8 Delay Street.

The three-hour meeting focused on sharing communities' ideas on diabetes prevention and management—a disease that is the biggest health problem facing Cambodian-Americans today. The meeting was conducted using CHC's innovative video technology that can reach anywhere in the world with large screens and interactive capabilities.

CHC of Danbury was invited to be a host site by Khmer Health Advocates, Inc. of West Hartford, which was looking for a community-based health-care site that treats Cambodian-Americans. "You make our people feel welcome because you work with them in our Khmer language," said Heang Tan, who attended the meeting. CHC's historic ties to the Cambodian community go back to the early 1980s when significant numbers of Cambodians came to Connecticut and became patients of CHC.



*Cambodia-American guests with guest speaker Dr. Lim Keuky at left watch the proceedings of a historic video meeting of Cambodia-Americans on health-care issues. The Cambodia-Americans here gathered at the Community Health Center in Danbury, the lead site nationally for the meeting.*

"This was a very good time. Thank you for having us," said Ponlok Lun of Khmer Health Advocates. "We are very proud of this program. Our specialty today is to be able to speak in Cambodian about the program. We have Dr. Lim Keuky to explain how to care for diabetes as well as how to talk to your doctor. This is very important. Today's program will help, but we need to try again. Maybe on a weekend next time so more people can come and we can do more house-to-house outreach so if anyone has a question about their health they can call directly."

The town hall meeting was hosted by the National Cambodian American Health Initiative and the National Cambodian American Diabetes Project. Other cities linked to Danbury by video included Philadelphia, Oakland, Chicago and Providence.

## International Hypertension Expert Lectures at CHC

Community Health Center, Inc.'s (CHC) medical staff gathered to hear and see a national expert on high blood pressure at CHC's monthly Primary Care Grand Rounds Series.

Dr. William B. White spoke to medical providers, nurses, and the leadership of the CHC on January 22 about the latest updates in outpatient management of high blood pressure, which affects thousands of CHC patients every year. His lecture was delivered in Middletown and viewed by CHC staff all over the state through CHC's videoconferencing system.

Dr. White is a professor of medicine and chief of hypertension and clinical pharmacology at the Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center at the University of Connecticut's School of Medicine in Farmington. He is considered a leading national authority on the treatment of high blood pressure, including the latest trials and advances in clinical care.

Dr. White's visit was part of CHC's monthly Grand Rounds, its ongoing professional education series for medical providers on innovations, issues and updates relevant to primary care providers. Dr. White is a well-published author and is the editor and founder of the international journal, *Blood Pressure Monitoring*, devoted to original research.



*Dr. William B. White (third from left) discusses his findings on high blood pressure with Community Health Center physicians and staff on January 22. Dr. White, from the University of Connecticut, is one of the country's leading experts on the treatment of hypertension.*

# CHC Partnership Organizes *Give Kids A Smile Days* 15 Community Dentists Volunteer In Effort

**This year, an estimated 200 children were seen by 15 dentists, hygienists, assistants and other volunteers in CHC dental offices in Meriden and Norwalk and in private and public offices in New Britain.**



Nearly 1 in 4 children between the age of 2 and 11 have untreated cavities in their baby teeth, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control. Many children enrolled in Connecticut's HUSKY program receive no dental services throughout the year.

The Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC), along with various community organizations and local dental offices throughout the state, sponsored their annual **Give Kids A Smile Day (GKAS)** program to do something about that. This unique partnership provided free dental services to local, qualifying children from low-income families.

Between February 3 and February 6, local CHC dental offices in Meriden and Norwalk and private and public offices in New Britain provided free services to their current patients in need throughout the day as well as taking referrals through CHC. "**Give Kids A Smile Day** has helped hundreds of children across the country. Connecticut's dentists have joined forces to take care of the kids. Some dentists have treated the children in their offices, some have volunteered at our dental clinics. Whatever the structure, the outcome is kids getting much needed dental care allowing them to stay focused in their studies," said Maggie Drozdowski Maule, CHC dental director. "I want to thank our private local dentists for taking the time to provide this care."

In New Britain, Mayor Timothy Stewart singled out **Give Kids A Smile Day** by city proclamation for providing important health services to New Britain children. He also complimented the partnership that made the day happen. In his city, there were seven different sites, including a city facility where a CHC hygienist saw patients.

In Meriden, Dr. David Hergott, the local leader of **GKAS** for the dental community in Meriden for the past five years, called the day a great success. "We ended up seeing 28 patients and provided \$7,400 worth of dentistry. We did everything from extractions to fillings, sealants, cleanings, fluoride treatments and x-rays." Dr. Hergott was also presented with a plaque by CHC for his years of volunteering at the event. "I think I was in shock," he said. "I really did not expect it and this really is a group effort."

In Norwalk, one volunteer reported that parents appreciated the service as much as their children: It was a close contest as to who was smiling wider—the parents or the children.

This was the fifth year **Give Kids A Smile Day** has been organized by the Community Health Center. The event is part of the American Dental Association's Give Kids A Smile Program. Each year this event hopes to raise awareness of the epidemic of untreated dental disease occurring here and across the country, and to the need to build local public and private partnerships to increase access to oral health care to solve this crisis.

*Shown at left, top: Dr. David Hergott works on a patient during Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) day in Meriden on February 6. Dr. Hergott, a private dentist, was given a plaque by Community Health Center for his five years of dedicated service to this important outreach program. At bottom: New Britain Hygienist Gabriela Rzemien and AmeriCorps Member Ian Avenia-Tapper take a break between patients at a GKAS site in a New Britain public facility.*

## CHC'S 160TH SERVICE LOCATION!

# School-Based Health Center Opens at Middletown High School

With the emergence of Swine flu and its impact on children, there was no better time to open a school-based health center. On October 29, 2009, Community Health Center (CHC) celebrated the grand opening of Middletown High School's new School-Based Health Center, located in the school at 200 LaRosa Lane. The new center is a unique service that brings health care directly to teenagers in this major Connecticut city. School and health center officials spoke at the event.

The Middletown High School School-Based Health Center is operated by the CHC of Middletown, and became the seventh comprehensive school-based health center operated by CHC in the state. The health center offers students CHC's core services of medical and behavioral health care, and is a site of CHC's innovative mobile dentistry unit.

Schools Superintendent Michael J. Frechette welcomed the health center to the high school, saying it served an important role in keeping students healthy and in school. Mark Masselli, CHC President and CEO, said school-based health centers such as the one at Middletown High are important pieces of CHC's commitment to clinical excellence and building healthy communities.

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) are freestanding medical centers, licensed by the state of Connecticut as outpatient clinics, located within or on the grounds of schools. SBHCs promote the physical and mental health of children and youth and ensure their success to comprehensive primary and preventive health care. SBHCs emphasize early identification of physical and mental health concerns and the prevention of more serious problems through early intervention.



*Shown above, top: The opening of Community Health Center's 7th comprehensive SBHC in Middletown High School last fall attracted statewide television and media. Here, APRN Karen Veith examines a student with a TV camera looking on. At bottom: Schools Superintendent Michael J. Frechette (on right) welcomed the health center to the school. Mark Masselli (on left), CHC President and CEO, said SBHCs are important pieces of CHC's commitment to clinical excellence.*



*Congressman Jim Himes toured the health center's Franklin Street Health Center in Stamford in January. He was impressed with the site and the staff's diversity.*

## Congressman Himes Tours Stamford Site

Congressman Jim Himes of the 4th Congressional District of Connecticut toured the Franklin Street Community Health Center site of Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) in January and came away impressed. Himes, who represents southern Fairfield County, toured CHC's Stamford site, which recently added a medical practice to its successful dental program.

Himes spoke in Spanish to CHC's Spanish-speaking staff and was impressed with the staff's diversity. The congressman readily understood CHC's desire to be a world-class health organization—CHC sees almost 16,000 patients in its three Fairfield County sites in Stamford, Norwalk and Danbury and is in 23 schools in the county with its mobile dentistry program.

The congressman did a lot of listening—he was also interested in oral health care and CHC's work with oral health patients who are HIV-positive. Himes' January 5th visit lasted an hour. In attendance from CHC were Adele Gordon, Fairfield County Sites Director, Tom Diaz, Fairfield County Practice Manager, Mark Masselli, President and CEO, and Margaret Flinter, Vice President and Clinical Director. They thanked him for his work in Washington, particularly on behalf of health care.

### President Signs Bill with \$225,000 for Nurse Practitioner Program at CHC

President Obama has signed into law a spending bill that provides \$225,000 in funding for CHC to support the country's first formal residency training program for new family nurse practitioners. The funding was supported by Senators Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, D-3rd Dist., and Congressmen Joe Courtney, D-2nd Dist., Chris Murphy, D-5th Dist., and John Larson, D-1st Dist.

CHC developed this program in 2007 in response to the need for additional training for new nurse practitioners who aspire to practice in the complex setting of federally qualified health centers, such as CHC. Health centers are the largest system of primary care in the U.S. and face enormous demands for primary care providers ready to care for individuals and families across the lifespan.

CHC's residency program accepts four newly graduated and certified family nurse practitioners annually and provides them with intensive training in the health problems commonly seen in health centers. The 12-month, full-time residency accepts only family nurse practitioners committed to developing practice careers as primary care providers in community health centers. CHC graduated its first class of four family nurse practitioners in August 2008, its second class in August 2009 and its third class is underway.

### CHC Receives U.S. Grant of \$400,000 to Expand Electronic Health Records

CHC has received one of five grants awarded nationwide for Health Information Technology and Quality Improvement from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The \$400,000 grant, announced by Secretary Kathleen Sebelius of HHS, will build on the pioneering work that CHC has done with electronic health records. CHC was one of only five agencies to receive funding.

The focus of this grant is to build a national model for hypertension control with a focus on minority groups. High blood pressure is a leading cause of illness and death among the population at large, but particularly among members of minority groups. Controlling high blood pressure will reduce the incidents of strokes, heart attacks, and heart and kidney failures. Because of historic disparities in our health-care delivery system, CHC with this grant will focus on minority groups, particularly African-American patients.

Included in the work will be a patient's ability to monitor his or her blood pressure from home, using a new Internet link to his or her health records. For CHC, the electronic health record in this case will improve provider behavior and practice, and patient engagement through self-management. For the patient's part, he or she will be able to do home monitoring of blood pressure readings, and download other blood pressure readings for

integration into his or her electronic health record. The expanded use of electronic health records by CHC will help improve the outcome of patients with high blood pressure.

CHC was one of the early pioneers to embrace electronic health records and now is introducing a new patient link, or "patient portal."

### CHC Receives U.S. Grant to Improve Children's Health-care Access

CHC has received a two-year grant of \$400,584 from the federal government to help uninsured and underinsured children access Medicaid and the state's HUSKY program through an electronic enrollment and screening tool. The grant was announced by Secretary Kathleen Sebelius of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

For CHC, the grant would reduce the number of uninsured children in CHC's service area by 30 percent, or 16,000 children by Year 2 through new enrollment and increased retention. The grant would also improve the efficiency and ease of the enrollment process by using a new web-based technology that facilitates eligibility screening and enrollment while providing advanced data management. The agency has been helping clients access Medicaid through its Access to Care Department for more than 15 years.

Read more news at [www.chc1.com](http://www.chc1.com)

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**Community Health Center, Inc.**

