

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Community Health Center Inc. Launches Telehealth Program for Chronic Pain Management

**MIDDLETOWN, Conn; January 3, 2013:** Community Health Center, Inc., based in Middletown, Connecticut announces the launch of a national telehealth program linking health care clinicians in Connecticut and Arizona with one of the nation's leading chronic pain management facilities. On Thursday, January 3, 2013, clinicians working in CHC's primary care sites around Connecticut and at El Rio Community Health Center in Tucson, Arizona, linked up via video conferencing to pain management experts in Arizona in the first of what will be weekly telemedicine consultations aimed at improving management for patients suffering from chronic pain. In a first-of-its-kind health center-based program, CHC is partnering with Integrated Pain Center of Arizona (IPCA) to mine their expertise in providing evidence-based, holistic, patient-centered treatment for chronic pain, which has reached epidemic proportions in this country.

According to recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control, one out of six Americans (50 million people) experiences some kind of chronic pain during the year, and the majority will seek treatment in a primary care center such as CHCI. Studies show that chronic pain costs the nation 50 million lost days of work, 750 thousand hospitalizations per year and increased incidents of depression and prescription drug abuse.

Modeled after CHC's successful **Project ECHO** telehealth program for Hepatitis C and HIV, Dr. Daren Anderson, Vice President, Chief Quality Officer at Community Health Center, Inc., and his team developed **Project Next Steps - Project ECHO for Chronic Pain Management** with the idea that effective chronic pain management requires expertise from a variety of disciplines. "There is no single approach to managing chronic pain," Dr. Anderson said. "This format will bring together experts in pharmacology, behavioral health, primary care and alternative therapies, offering myriad solutions to this complex issue, based on the needs of each individual patient - and the broad range of expertise from multiple clinicians."

"The expectation is that with ECHO the PCP will have the ability to meet all their patient's needs for effective pain management, without having to send them on to other pain specialist," said Dr. Bennet Davis, President of Integrated Pain Center of

Arizona. “Specialists are often in short supply, or cannot be easily accessed by patients who are uninsured or underinsured.”

This program will help foster change in the current health care landscape. If successful, **Project ECHO for Chronic Pain Management** could decrease utilization of specialty referral services, surgery, imaging and other laboratory services, excessive or inappropriate medication prescribing, and emergency room visits for pain complaints, among others.

The **Project ECHO for Chronic Pain Management** Telehealth Program is funded in part by grants from the Pfizer Foundation, the Mayday Fund, the Cox Foundation, and The Wallace Research Foundation.

**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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