

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### CELEBRATING OVER A DECADE OF HEALTHY SMILES AND ORAL HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS

The Community Health Center Inc.'s participation across the state continues to support The American Dental Association's Annual Give Kids a Smile Day

**Middletown, CT–January 25, 2013:** For over a decade, organizations from public and private foundations have come together to create an oral health awareness movement. The American Dental Association (ADA) began the Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) program in 2002 as a way for ADA members to join with others in the community to provide dental services to underserved children. Ten years ago the Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) became one of the participants of Give Kid's a Smile Day to help target the underserved populations among their regular patient demographic. Since 2002, GKAS has served over 10,000 patients with a total value of service equaling over four million dollars.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, early childhood cavities are the most common chronic disease in children and although noteworthy improvements have been made in the past decade, oral health significance is still being overlooked. One major way CHC has helped increase children's access to oral health services is through the mobile dental program which brings dental services directly to 171 CT Schools. CHC Mobile Dental services have been funded through different Connecticut Health Foundation grants which work to support the integration of oral health at every point where children and their families intersect with health care, human service and education systems.

Once again this year, CHC will participate in the American Dental Association's 11<sup>th</sup> annual Give Kids A Smile Day (GKASD) on Friday, February 1st along with various other planned dates during the month. CHC's dental offices have scheduled multiple days throughout February where CHC and other private dentists across the state will offer free cleanings, exams, sealants, fillings, fluoride treatments and dental education to children with HUSKY insurance or no dental insurance.

Give Kids A Smile activities raises awareness for policy makers and stakeholders about the ongoing challenges that low-income families face in finding dental care. The events are free and open to all children without a regular dental home. For more information or to schedule a dental appointment, contact Raquel Abbasi, program manager for CHC's mobile dental program, at (860) 754-6472 or [AbbasiR@chc1.com](mailto:AbbasiR@chc1.com)

"CHC's goal for Give Kids a Smile day is to provide access to the full scope of dental services and connect children and families to a regular dental provider to set them on their way to a healthy smile for a lifetime." According to CHC's Chief Dental Officer, Margaret Drozdowski Maule, DMD, MBA. "The establishment of regular dental care as early as the age of one is an important aspect of our comprehensive primary health care", stated Dr. Drozdowski Maule, "Give Kids a Smile Day is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the importance of oral health and regular dental care, as well as the delivery of the services to the children who need them."

**WHAT:** Give Kids a Smile day, featuring free cleanings, oral exams, sealants, fillings, fluoride treatments and dental education for underserved children. This event is open to the general public and not limited to current CHC patients.

**WHEN:** Friday, February 1, (Old Saybrook & Meriden) Saturday, February 2, (Meriden) Friday, February 15, (New Britain & Middletown) Tuesday, February 19, (Stamford & Norwalk) Friday, February 22 (New London) A complete list of Give Kids a Smile participants can be found in the News & Events section of [chc1.com](http://chc1.com).

**WHERE:** Community Health Center locations across the state: New Britain, 85 Lafayette St.; Middletown, 634 Main St.; Meriden, 134 State St.; New London, 1 Shaws Cove; Old Saybrook, 263 Main St.; Norwalk, 49 Day Street; and Stamford, 141 Franklin St.

**COST:** Free

**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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