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## Opinion

### Federal Funding Will Allow City's School-Based Health Center to Expand

The Community Health Center's Affordable Health Care Act grant will be used to upgrade Middletown's Macdonough Elementary health center, which offer students medical, behavioral health and dental care.

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The [Community Health Center](#) has been awarded \$451,370 in federal funding to upgrade of the school-based health centers located in Middletown's Macdonough Elementary School and New Britain's Smalley Academy.

On Dec. 19, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced awards of more than \$80 million to 197 school-based health center programs across the country, made possible by the Affordable Care Act.

"These new investments will help school-based health centers establish new sites or upgrade their current facilities to keep our children healthy," Sebelius said.

"CHC is proud to be the largest provider of school-based health services in the State. These centers are a critical part of our work, because they allow us to reach more uninsured and underserved children and adolescents and ensure access to the highest quality of care during their formative years," said Mark Masselli, president and CEO of Community Health Center.

CHC will be utilizing the funds to make much-needed renovations at the two schools. [Macdonough Elementary School](#) in Middletown is the first school-based health center opened by CHC 20 years ago.

Services are offered in different sections of the school. A new space has been defined by the school's principal that can accommodate all services in one area. CHC will renovate this portion of the building to reflect CHC's current model of care seen in its main sites.

The space will include fully integrated primary care (medical, behavioral health and dental), as well as dedicated work space (or pods) where providers can interact with each other easily and share knowledge.

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and intervention for acute chronic illnesses, long-term chronic care, as well as group and individual behavioral health care.

Students without health insurance receive free services and are provided assistance in determining their eligibility for a public health insurance program, such as HUSKY.

"We have been working with local school boards for 20 years now to develop school health services consistent with their mission," Masselli said.

"Having access to care allows students to adopt life-long healthy habits, experience improved health outcomes and possibly even improve their school performance. Our centers offer convenience to both parents and children, eliminating missed work and school days due to a child's medical appointment," explained Jane Hylan, Director of School Health Services at CHC.

"CHC has been fortunate over the years to have support from the communities we serve, local organizations and business leaders, affording us the ability to grow and thrive so that we can continue to improve access to care to all our patients, wherever they may be," said Margaret Flinter, APRN, Senior Vice President and Clinical Director at CHC.

Today, CHC operates a range of health services in schools from full scope (medicine, dentistry, mental health) to single service, such as behavioral health, to a widely acclaimed mobile dental program in over 100 schools across Connecticut. The mobile dental program is nationally recognized for its efficient, effective outreach, enrollment, and clinical services.

"We thank Congresswoman Rose DeLauro for her strong support of the Affordable Care Act, which made this grant funding possible," Flinter said.

[The Affordable Care Act](#) provides \$200 million in funding from fiscal years 2010 – 2013 for the School-Based Health Center Capital Program. Today's grants are the third in the series of awards that is made available to school-based health centers under the Affordable Care Act.

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