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Community Health Center, Inc. Establishes Weitzman Quality Institute

First of its Kind Institute Aims to Promote Research and Quality Improvement in Primary Health Care

MIDDLETOWN, CT (July 12, 2013): Officials from Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) announces the establishment of the Weitzman Quality Institute (WQI), an institute dedicated to promoting quality healthcare for CHC's 130,000 patients receiving care across the state in over 200 service locations, through research, training, and improvement work.

During an open house event on July 11th, health care professionals, policy makers, business leaders and local officials were introduced to the work being conducted at the WQI. Program themed rooms provided an insider's perspective on the Institute's cutting-edge research and practice innovations.

The Institute promotes quality improvement and practice redesign in healthcare and research that helps answer critical questions arising in day-to-day practice of primary care. Research and improvement work conducted at the Institute are focused on areas such as telehealth, health disparities, chronic diseases, and performance improvement. The Institute is the first of its kind established in the U.S. by a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

WQI seeks to reduce health disparities and improve health care delivery by:

- Training and empowering staff through formal coaching and the use of tools and techniques to systematically evaluate and make changes in the care delivery process;
- Conducting research on interventions to improve care coordination, pain management, and chronic disease management;
- Studying the use of innovative technology to improve the interface between primary care providers, patients and specialists;
- Engaging healthcare staff at all levels to participate in improvement work;
- Training skilled improvement coaches and applying state-of-the-art process improvement techniques to healthcare;
- Conducting weekly telehealth sessions joining specialists with primary care providers nationwide to improve management of patients with complex health conditions.

Currently the Institute has secured over \$2.5 million dollars in funding to support research and improvement work in a wide variety of areas. Funding comes from a number of federal and private philanthropic sources. WQI collaborates with strategic partners including General Electric the Dartmouth Institute, University of Connecticut, Yale University, and Wesleyan University. Internationally, WQI works closely with the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals in Sheffield, England and Jonkoping University in Sweden. Additionally, WQI has published research in peer reviewed medical journals and presented at national conferences.

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WQI's staff focuses on a wide range of topics relevant to primary care. Adopting patient-centered strategies and promoting the implementation of evidence-based care are among the top priorities. Research is cross-disciplinary, involving medicine, dentistry, behavioral health, pharmacy, and nursing.

"One of the principal elements of the Institute is the development and promotion of new quality improvement and system redesign strategies for healthcare delivery," explained Dr. Daren Anderson, VP/Chief Quality Officer and Director of the new institute. "Our quality improvement team has developed a unique system using the latest tools and techniques from both healthcare and non-healthcare industries. We emphasize front line participation in improvement work with trained Quality Improvement coaches who support the process." WQI offers customized training to other healthcare organizations interested in learning and applying QI tools and techniques to their own organizations.

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.

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