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Community Health Center, Inc. Receives \$250,000 Grant From Aetna for Study to Improve Coordination of Health Care

 By: [Community Health Center, Inc.](#) via [GlobeNewswire News Releases](#)

Posted on September 14, 2012 at 13:22 PM EDT

Research Aimed at Improving Patient Health, Enhancing Patient Experience and Lowering Costs

MIDDLETOWN, Conn., Sept. 14, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) has been awarded a \$250,000 grant from health care benefits company Aetna to conduct a two-year study aimed at improving the coordination of health care for low-income and underinsured patients at community health care clinics and similar safety-net health care providers.

The study's goal is to create a measurement toolkit that can successfully evaluate the levels of care coordination at primary care practices providing outpatient care for underserved populations.

Care coordination is a central component to many health care reform efforts to improve patients' health, patients' experience of care and at the same time lower costs. Care coordination is typically defined as a patient-centered, interdisciplinary approach where all of a patient's needs are managed across providers and settings in an integrated, cost-effective manner.

"According to a study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, primary care physicians for Medicare patients typically share patient care for their caseload with 299 other physicians with whom they should coordinate care," said Daren Anderson, M.D., vice president and chief quality officer of CHC. "Clearly, closely coordinated care is an important strategy to make sure patients have all their health needs addressed and don't receive conflicting instructions, duplicated tests or unnecessary treatments.

"Currently, there are very few tools available to assess the quality of care coordination in various settings, and there are none that are specific to our setting," Anderson said. "Aetna's grant will enable us to address these issues and provide tools to health centers nationwide that are working to improve health outcomes, enhance patient experience and reduce costs."

Anderson and his research team will test the care coordination measures they develop at a cross-section of CHC sites, Connecticut's largest network of Federally Qualified Health Centers. CHC has primary care sites in 13 communities in the state, as well as school-based clinics and mobile dental units. CHC serves 130,000 patients, nearly all living at or below 200 percent of the poverty level.

"The results of CHC's study have implications for similar safety-net settings in the United States," said Gillian Barclay, D.D.S., Dr. P.H., vice president of the Aetna Foundation, which will provide ongoing support for the study. "The more precisely we can envision what coordinated care looks like and how best to weave it into the everyday delivery of health care, the closer we can get to an optimal delivery of care that produces the best outcomes at the lowest cost."

Improving health care through better integrated and more closely coordinated health care is one of the Aetna Foundation's three program areas. In the past two years, Aetna and the Aetna Foundation have directed more than \$2 million in grants for projects in the United States and the United Kingdom to advance integrated health care and measure the effectiveness of different integrated health care models.

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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 underinsured 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 201 locations statewide, offering primary care in medicine, dentistry and behavioral health services. For more information, visit www.chc1.com.

About Aetna


Aetna is one of the nation's leading diversified health care benefits companies, serving approximately 36.7 million people with information and resources to help them make better informed decision about their health care. Aetna offers a broad range of traditional, voluntary and consumer-directed health insurance products and related services, including medical, pharmacy, dental, behavioral health, group life and disability plans, medical management capabilities, health care management services for Medicaid plans and health information exchange technology services. Our customers include employer groups, individuals, college students, part-time and hourly workers, health plans, health care providers, governmental units, government-sponsored plans, labor groups and expatriates. For more information, see www.aetna.com.

About Aetna Foundation

The Aetna Foundation, Inc. is the independent charitable and philanthropic arm of Aetna Inc. Since 1980, Aetna and the Aetna Foundation have contributed more than \$413 million in grants and sponsorships, including \$19.2 million awarded in 2011. As a national health foundation, we promote wellness, health, and access to high-quality health care for everyone. This work is enhanced by the time and commitment of Aetna employees, who have volunteered more than 2.6 million hours since 2003. Our current giving is focused on addressing the rising rate of adult and childhood obesity in the United State; promoting racial and ethnic equity in health and health care; and advancing integrated health care. For more information, visit www.aetnafoundation.org.

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