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Community Health Center, Inc. Recognizes Depression Awareness Month

CHC Celebrates Success with its Universal Depression Screening Policy

Middletown, CT (October 23, 2012): An estimated one in ten U.S. adults report suffering from depression, which makes it among the leading causes of disability worldwide. One major barrier to treatment is the stigma of mental illness and attempts to avoid the topic; approximately 60–80% of people who receive treatment for depression improve, however, less than half of those suffering from depression seek treatment. In a recent study released in September, 2012, the American Journal of Public Health mentions that suicide is now the leading cause of injury and mortality in the US and depression screening rates on a national level are extremely low.

Misdiagnosed patients and lack of referrals are the two leading components of why depressed patients are going without proper care. In response to this trend, Community Health Center, inc. employed the Universal Depression Screening policy in 2010 to ensure that behavioral health care was routinely implemented into its standard of care for all patients, including prenatal patients and those seen at school-based health centers. Two years after enacting the policy, the number of patients screened skyrocketed. In 2009, only 21.50% of CHC's prenatal patients were being screened for depression and by 2012 the percentage had climbed to 69 percent. The same type of success within adolescents (ages 13–17) and Adult (18+) rates has been evident as well. The percentage of adolescents screened rose from 1.12 percent to 41.11 percent and adult screenings increased from 6.61 percent to 61.27 percent.

The rapid growth in the percentage of patients screened during the past two years proves that there is plenty of room for improvement within primary care centers when it comes to depression screenings and awareness. "CHC has been a leader in delivering integrated medical and behavioral health care for many years, and has been a pioneer in reducing the stigma associated with mental illness by incorporating it into practice and as a standard for all patients." according to J. Nwando Olayiwola, MD, MPH, FAAFP, Chief Medical Officer of the Community Health Center, Inc.

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. Currently, CHC delivers service in more than 200 locations statewide, offering primary care in medicine, dentistry and behavioral health services. For more information, visit chc1.com.

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