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### Comm. Health Center enters Hartford

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#### JOHN STEARNS

Middletown-based Community Health Center Inc. has established its first beachhead in Hartford, after reaching a deal to run Connecticut Children's Medical Center's primary care facility on New Britain Avenue.

CCMC staff and providers won't change, but patients will have access to new comprehensive dental hygiene and behavioral health services from CHC, which will run the clinic at 76 New Britain Ave.

Physicians will continue to be employed by the Connecticut Children's Specialty Group, which currently runs the Hartford clinic and no layoffs are anticipated, CCMC President and CEO Jim Shmerling said in a statement.

"Connecticut Children's has an exciting opportunity to expand primary care services, providing our children and families access to enhanced behavioral health and dental services while bringing significant new funding from the federal government to the children of Hartford," Shmerling said.

CHC will receive \$650,000 annually in federal funding for the Hartford expansion, a CHC spokeswoman said. CHC is a federally qualified health center.

"Through the partnership with the Community Health Center ... the care of our patients and their families will extend beyond primary medical care to include coordination of medical, dental and behavioral health services, all critical components of effective primary care," Shmerling added.

Before the Hartford expansion, CHC served 130,000 patients at 13 health centers. It also provides care to thousands of children annually at nearly 200 school-based sites across Connecticut.

Shmerling said CHC has agreed to sustain the residency program and medical student training in primary care at the current level with the same number of residents and students through the Department of Pediatrics at UConn's School of Medicine.

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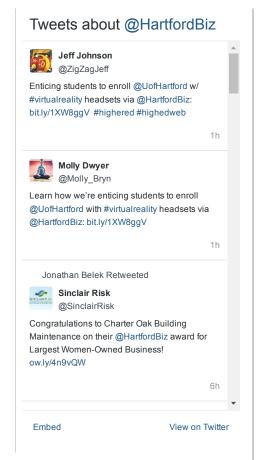
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