



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, INC. LISTS THE TOP THREE BACK-TO-SCHOOL HEALTH PRIORITIES FOR CHILDREN

**MIDDLETOWN, Conn. (August 26, 2010)** – A visit to the doctor and advance planning can be just as important as purchasing school supplies or reviewing class schedules when preparing children for the school year.

“Many students miss school due to an illness or injury that could have been prevented,” said Dr. J. Nwando Olayiwola, chief medical officer of Community Health Center, Inc. (CHC) and a family practice physician. “By taking simple precautions and promoting healthy choices at home, parents can help children have a healthy, successful school year.”

Dr. Olayiwola reveals the top three health priorities for children as they return to school:

**1. Make sure immunizations are up-to-date.** Vaccinations help prevent the spread of communicable, or infectious, illnesses, such as chicken pox, whooping cough and tetanus. These illnesses can be spread from one infected person to another or through inanimate objects, like door knobs or school desk tops. **It’s not too early to think about flu shots.** Flu season begins in September/October, and children ages 5 and younger or with chronic health problems like asthma and diabetes are at especially high risk of developing serious flu complications. Get the immunization for everyone in your household to avoid catching it at school or work and spreading it to other family members, including grandparents who can develop flu complications. Beginning in early September, CHC will offer daily express flu clinics to its existing patients.

**2. Talk to the school in advance about your child’s health.** If your child has a medical or behavioral condition, such as asthma or ADHD, that prevents or limits participation or function in typical school activities or requires medication, let school administrators and teachers know, and provide necessary documentation in advance. If there is a school-based health center at your children’s school, enroll them.

**3. Plan children’s lunches and activities.** One-third of American children are overweight, and childhood obesity is becoming an epidemic. Healthy eating will not only balance children’s weight, but also ensure they have abundant energy throughout the school day. Plan ahead – sit down with your children weekly to determine what they will bring for lunch and make it ahead of time, or review the school cafeteria’s menu and identify the week’s healthy options. Before the school year begins, discuss extracurricular activities with your children. After-school activities provide a well-rounded educational experience and develop key social skills. If your children do not play sports, look at ways to incorporate physical activity into their daily schedules. If the school is close enough, encourage them to walk or ride a bike a few days a week. Recent data shows that only 36 percent of children meet doctors’ recommendations for physical activity.

Taking these small actions will help ensure your kids make the grade academically and physically. For more information on CHC’s services and programs, visit [chc1.com](http://chc1.com).

### 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 special populations. CHC is focused on improving health outcomes for its more than 100,000 patients as well as building healthy communities. Currently, CHC delivers service in 173 locations statewide, offering primary care in medical, dental and behavioral health services.