

A quarterly publication featuring news about CHC's Services, Innovations, Partnerships, and Special Events



CHC Board of Directors

Standing, from left: Joseph Vincent, Terry Danaher, Gary Reid, Carol Mitchell, Mark Masselli

Sitting, from left: Sandra Micalizzi, Angela Anthony, Jill Maconi

Not in the photo: Rosa Ventura, Mary Guzman

Celebrating 45 Years

Forty-five years ago, a group of Middletown community activists and Wesleyan University students opened a free clinic, proclaiming **health care is a right and not a privilege**.

It took courage to raise that banner, pointing out the inequalities in our health system, acknowledging that some of our neighbors couldn't obtain health care because of race or economic standing. In a small city, where everyone knows each other, it was pointing a finger. And, it took courage because the public practice of medicine didn't exist; instead, there was a charity model—sick people were victims of circumstance—and care was doled out according to perceived worth. Raising that banner wasn't just our idea. It was a notion long discussed in this country that came to fruition with the National Free Clinic Council in 1968 and its organizational symposia in 1969 and 1970.

Courage needs a lift, and we have been blessed to attract people with the compassion and the critical thinking skills to work past a slogan to a sustainable model of holistic care. In 1972, we were blessed to have the Wesleyan students and people like Gerry Weitzman, local businessman and philanthropist, and Reba Moses, civil rights and anti-poverty activist, who thought hard about how the system should look and work. And in 2017, we're blessed with staff who bring their excellence and passion to this work, every single day.

We hope others will find the courage to raise their own banners and to think critically about the needs that still require tending. To all those who have helped and those still eager to, we thank you as we celebrate another birthday.

New Knowledge and Technology Center Under Construction in Middletown

"Our work doesn't occur in a vacuum. We are so grateful to all our staff and to the thousands of friends and supporters who have contributed to our work. It has been an amazing 45-year journey, and one we are excited to continue into the years ahead."

—Mark Masselli
Founder, President and CEO
Community Health Center, Inc.

Community Health Center, Inc. held groundbreaking ceremonies for its Knowledge and Technology Center in Middletown on May 1st, the 45th anniversary of the organization's founding. State and city officials and friends and supporters of CHC, one of the nation's largest community health centers, attended the event to celebrate the new three-story, 30,000 square foot building that will house information technology, telehealth, communications and other support services and functions for the organization's statewide network of health care sites and clinics.

"This new building is an important milestone in our continuing effort to provide quality, respectful health-care to the underserved," says Mark Masselli, president and CEO of CHC. "It will allow us to centralize our support staff and services, making us much more efficient and freeing up space at other sites for more clinical care and health education services." It will also provide much needed space for the Weitzman Institute and its research, healthcare delivery programs and workforce development training projects that are transforming primary care here and around the U.S.

The Knowledge and Technology Center is the second major building constructed solely for CHC and its growing research, education, and primary care initiatives. The first one, opened in 2012 at 675 Main Street in Middletown, consolidated clinical care from three nearby out-of-date buildings and allowed CHC of Middletown to care for 50 percent more patients, while providing parking and handicap accessibility. Today, CHC provides care at 13 other clinical sites and at more than 200 school-based health centers and mobile sites throughout the state.



Left to right: The Knowledge and Technology Center; Margaret Flintner and Mark Masselli; Groundbreaking begins

Community Health Center, Inc.—The First 45 Years



The original free clinic



Renovations begin at 635 Main Street



CHC's first board of directors



Margaret Flinter with patient



Modern reception area



School-based dental care



Roof garden at 675 Main Street

The amazing journey begins...

May 1, 1972: The first CHC health center opens

CHC opened its free dental clinic on May 1, 1972, in an old house on College Street in Middletown, eventually offering medical and behavioral health services. Closed down in 1976 for having a hallway leading to the clinic that was one inch too narrow, we moved our operation to 635 Main Street and opened with very wide hallways.

1980: CHC opens in Old Saybrook

The expansion came at the invitation of Monica Eggert, director of the Estuary Area Agency on Aging, who said CHC was needed because "elderly people in America cannot get access to dental services since Medicare forgot to include it as a service."

May 1981: CHC opens New Horizons Domestic Violence Shelter

New Horizons opened with its first occupants, a woman and her three children, after a shelter in Middletown burned down in a fire set by an angry husband.

April 1989: CHC begins AIDS Outreach

CHC starts an AIDS outreach program for women with a \$25,000 grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Today, CHC is a leader in efforts to provide high quality, respectful care in the primary care setting for those with HIV/AIDS.

1991: CHC opens in Meriden

After learning that Meriden and the state of Connecticut were spending thousands of dollars a month on cab rides to get underinsured patients to doctors in New Britain, CHC opened a small clinic in the St. Vincent de Paul Place Shelter.

April 1992: CHC expands to New London

CHC assumed operation of a community health center in New London at the request of Lawrence & Memorial Hospital.

March 1993: CHC opens its first School-Based Health Center

Aware of the lack of health services for local youngsters, CHC partnered with local elementary school Macdonough, two blocks away, to open its first School-Based Health Center.

October 1994: CHC opens in New London

To expand care in New London, CHC purchased 1 Shaws Cove at a government-sponsored auction during the national economic downturn of the early 1990s.

1995: CHC opens in Groton

CHC opened in Groton at the request of a group of residents who said people have "Star Bridge" anxiety and were afraid to drive over it.

August 1996: CHC opens in New Britain

CHC purchased an old building and transformed it into a stunning primary care practice after Route 9 cut the city in half, leaving many needy people without adequate access to primary care.

May 1997: CHC merges with Meri-Care Dental

CHC added dental services to its medical and behavioral health services in Meriden by merging with Meri-Care Dental.

2000: Vinnie's Jump and Jive Dance Hall Opens

CHC became the first community health center to open a public dance

hall as a way to improve health for everyone and called it Vinnie's Jump and Jive after local businessman Vincent Amato, who donated the space for classes.

July 2000: CHC gains national accreditation

CHC receives first national accreditation from the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations for its existing sites: Meriden, New Britain, Middletown, New London, Old Saybrook, and Groton.

October 2000: CHC opens in Clinton

In the late 1990s, Adele Gordon suggested joining forces with the Dental Center of Stamford, which she founded. The merger occurred in 2005. The practice relocated to Franklin Street in 2007 and added medical care in 2009.

2007: The Weitzman Institute opens

CHC opens the Weitzman Center, an organization dedicated to transforming the delivery of primary care through research, technology, education, and

innovation. It is named in honor of Gerard Weitzman, a local pharmacist and one of the first members of the Middletown community to support CHC's free clinic.

September 2007: CHC opens in Norwalk

When the local Headstart program learned they would be shut down if they couldn't get dental care for kids, they called Adele Gordon for help. Within three days, she helped CHC dental staff examine all 100 kids. Impressed, Mayor Alex Knopp invited CHC into the community.

October 2007: CHC opens in Enfield

After taking care of farm workers in the region for years, CHC opened a site, working with the North Central District Health Department to establish the need.

September 2007: The first Nurse Practitioner Residency Program begins

In her role as senior investigator for the Weitzman Institute, Margaret Flinter created the country's first formal residency program to train new nurse practitioners for primary care consistent with the principles of the

patient centered medical home. It has been replicated around the country.

September 2008: CHC opens in Danbury

February 2010: CHC opens in Bristol

January 2012: Project ECHO®
CHC becomes the only Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) to operate its own Project ECHO® videoconferencing clinics, specifically designed to meet the needs of safety net primary care providers and their communities. We are indebted to Dr. Sanjeev Arora from New Mexico, who developed the ECHO model and inspired our work.

January 2012: CHC opens in Waterbury

April 2012: Another national accreditation

CHC earns its second Joint Commission Accreditation as a primary care medical home. CHC continues to pursue external evaluations and learn from these accrediting institutions. In April 2011, the national Council on Quality Assurance recognized the 11 existing CHC sites as a patient-centered medical home.

November 2015: Establishes Community eConsult Network

CeCN begins providing specialty electronic consultations within days of the request from a primary care provider, improving access to care for the underserved.

January 2015: National Cooperative Agreement

CHC is selected by the Health Resources and Service Administration to run the National Training and Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement and train community health centers across the country. Over the course of the first nine months, there were over 2,800 participants from all 50 states.

March 2016: The Weitzman Institute launches national LGBT program

With the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Association of Community Health Centers, and Fenway Health, the Weitzman Institute launches a national program with 10 community health centers, including CHC, to improve primary care for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population.

July 2016: CHC opens in Hartford

CHC is invited by Connecticut Children's Medical Center to manage their primary care facility on New Britain Avenue in Hartford, a practice with around 10,000 children.

July 2016: CHC joins the Precision Medicine Initiative

CHC is one of six community health centers asked by NIH to help gather data from one million people in the U.S. to accelerate research and improve health.

September 2016: The National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement begins

CHC and Salud Family Health Centers in northern Colorado, two of the nation's leading primary care organizations, collaborate to form NIMAA and begin the first class to train medical assistants for team-based primary care.

...looking forward with excitement to a future of continued excellence in serving our communities.



Middletown Est. 1972



Old Saybrook Est. 1980



Meriden Est. 1991



School-Based Health Center Est. 1993



New London Est. 1994



Groton Est. 1995



New Britain Est. 1996



Clinton Est. 2000



Stamford Est. 2005



Norwalk Est. 2007



Enfield Est. 2007



Danbury Est. 2008



Bristol Est. 2010



Waterbury Est. 2012



Hartford Est. 2016



Growing in Stamford

Stamford's location on Connecticut's so-called Gold Coast belies the fact that many of the residents rely on Community Health Center, Inc. for their medical, dental and behavioral health care.



CHC Stamford, Fifth Street

To meet that need, CHC will begin renovations this summer on a recently purchased, 29,024 square foot building on Fifth Street. The re-modeled building will supplement clinical care at the current Franklin Street facility.

"The design of space is important to people and our goal always is to provide excellent care in a setting that people find inviting," says Mark Masselli.

In the new Fifth Street location, CHC will create additional exam rooms so it can see more patients more efficiently. The renovations in the new building will create three pods, each with two medical providers and related clinical staff and with a behavioral health provider. A dental hygienist will also provide services at the site.

With the additional space, CHC of Stamford will provide medical, dental and behavioral care to about **8,000 additional patients through more than 23,000 visits annually.**

Groundbreaking for Knowledge and Technology Center *(See story on front cover)*



Clockwise from top left: Officials and friends break ground with help from Macdonough School second graders; Margaret Flinter and Mark Masselli; The Knowledge and Technology Center; Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman

Community Health Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency. Since 1972, we have been building a world-class primary healthcare system, that is committed to caring for special populations, and that is focused on improving health outcomes for our patients as well as building healthy communities.

