

Congresswoman meets with constituents for a roundtable health care discussion

Middletown
By SLOAN BREWSTER Press
PRESS STAFF

MIDDLETOWN — Mary Beth Johnson of Middlefield lost her job this week.

If she doesn't find something soon she will be faced with a high deductible on her health insurance and will have to pay a high premium to support a policy through COBRA.

Johnson, who said she worked at Aetna in Middletown for 11 years, found out Monday she no longer had a job. Friday she shared her story with a room full of people, including Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-3), during a roundtable discussion on Health Reform at the Family Resource Center at Community Health Center on Main Street.

"Obviously, I would like to be out there working," Johnson said. "I've never not worked in my life."

During the discussion, DeLauro announced Connecticut would get \$1.63 billion in recovery funding for federally qualified health centers; of that amount, Community Health Center, Inc. of Middletown will receive \$670,628.

Community Health Center has 160 locations in the state, with its



Rep. Rosa DeLauro and Community Health Center CEO Mark Masselli discuss the health coverage of the uninsured at the Community Health Center in Middletown at a roundtable discussion Friday. Rob Heyl

headquarters in Middletown, and last year served 60,000 patients, CEO Mark Masselli said during the roundtable. The centers serve uninsured and underinsured clients.

According to statistics DeLauro gave, 326,000 people in Connecticut between 2007 and 2008 had no insurance.

"Four out of five uninsured in Connecticut are in working families," the congresswoman said. "These are not folks who are doggin' it, who are not trying to carry their weight."

"Four out of five uninsured in Connecticut are in working families. These are not folks who are doggin' it, who are not trying to carry their weight."

ROSA DELAURO
Congresswoman

In addition, she spoke of women without insurance.

"Most people don't know this, but women more than a fifth of women don't have health insurance," DeLauro said.

She advised people to ask ques-

tions when they sign up for health care to make sure they have more than preventive care, but will have coverage in the event of an illness or disease.

DeLauro spoke of the mother
See CHC, Page 6

CHC to receive \$670K in federal recovery funding

Continued from Page 4

of a former employee of hers and read a distressed e-mail from the woman. According to the e-mail the woman's mother, who had moved to Florida, was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and was told her health care provider would pay for a mastectomy but not chemotherapy. Except, her physician said she should get the chemo first and then, if necessary, the surgery.

"The whole thing has been incredibly difficult being so far away," DeLauro read. "My mother is very scattered right now ... I am panicked. It's been about a month-and-a-half and she hasn't had treatment yet."

The congresswoman then spoke of her own battle with cancer, "When you have cancer, a month-and-a-half is like death," she said.

Along with others present, DeLauro spoke of the need for national health care, which she said should be coupled with private insurance and rejected the notion such a government offer-



Rob Heyl

Rep. Rosa DeLauro shares her views on universal health care with Mark Masselli and Mary Johnson. Mary, who is on the Board of Selectmen in Middlefield, had her job eliminated by Aetna and will be facing the prospect of losing her insurance.

ing is socialist.

"It is a government issue, it is government who has to have a moral responsibility to be involved," DeLauro said. "I don't want an insurance company or an employer or a commander to tell me what I need to have. I want a physician."

Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce President Larry McHugh spoke of the need for small businesses to be able to offer insurance to employees.

"What we have to do is have a policy that people can access health care at a small [cost],"

McHugh said. "We have to have a policy where people can be insured and can have the opportunity for their families to be covered."

McHugh also spoke of his hope the plan to build a new building for the Community Health Center would come to fruition.

The project, which is on a list for hopeful funding through stimulus money, would also move St. Vincent DePaul Place to an existing building set off Main Street — the former bowling alley — that now houses the center's Middletown medical offices.