



**PRESS RELEASE**

August 1, 2014

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**RI Health Center Association and Providence Community Health Centers Celebrate Opening of New Dental Offices, New Walgreens and Lifespan Offices in Providence**

***Association Releases Study Touting \$226 Million Economic Impact***

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**Providence, RI** –Rhode Island’s federal delegation and health care leaders gathered today to celebrate National Health Center Week and the grand opening of new dental offices at Providence Community Health Centers on Prairie Avenue in Providence. All four members of Rhode Island’s congressional delegation were presented with awards recognizing their support for community health centers.

The location for the celebration was the new 10,000 square foot dental facility at Providence Community Health Centers, which will allow for nine dental chairs this year, with plans to expand to 19 chairs next year. Providence Community Health Center currently serves 3,000 children in their dental offices, and hopes to serve as many as 18,000 following this expansion. The goal is to quadruple services and the center will be hiring an additional full time dentist, hygienist, part-time dentists and support staff. The center will also be expanding operations to include more evening and weekend access.

Also opening on the Providence Community Health Center campus are offices for Lifespan, which occupies 27,000 square feet, and a new Walgreens, which will offer retail sales and a full service pharmacy and is a one-of-a-kind “pilot” store on the campus of a community health center.

“I’m extremely proud of the medical, dental and behavioral health care services we are able to offer to this community. This campus is a true community development success story, and we had many partners, including Walgreens and Lifespan that helped to accomplish our goals,” said Merrill Thomas, president and CEO, Providence Community Health Centers.

“The expansion of the Providence Community Health Center campus is something we can all celebrate and should serve as a real catalyst for this community. It is critical for children in particular to have access to proper dental care and this expansion will accomplish that goal,” said Senator Jack Reed.

The association today also released a study on the economic impact of Rhode Island’s community health centers, which demonstrated a total economic impact of approximately \$226 million while supporting nearly 1800 jobs. The centers contributed \$9.7 million in state and local tax revenue and another \$19.3 million in federal tax revenue.

“Rhode Island’s community health centers are also local businesses,” said Jane Hayward, president and CEO of the Rhode Island Health Center Association. Their contributions to communities as

health care providers, employers, and developers are integral to local economies. In addition to direct and indirect economic contributions, Rhode Island's community health centers also generate \$184 million in savings to the health care system."

"Our health centers are a valuable resource to the communities they serve, providing tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders with quality health care," said Whitehouse, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. "The new dental offices at Providence Community Health Center will go a long way in addressing the need for affordable dental care in Rhode Island, and I look forward to the expansion of these services in future years."

"Rhode Island continues to be a leader in health care coverage and delivery, creating a model for the rest of the nation to emulate. The same is true for our community health centers, where high-quality, innovative, coordinated care is delivered to Rhode Islanders and their families," said Congressman Jim Langevin. "I am proud to represent so many outstanding health care professionals, and I am honored and humbled to be recognized for my commitment to our shared goal of supporting healthy communities."

"Community health centers play a critical role providing Rhode Islanders access to high-quality and cost-efficient medical care and I'm proud to support the Providence Community Health Center," said Congressman David Cicilline. "These centers are an essential resource specially developed for the communities they serve and I'm very pleased to celebrate the addition of a new facility that will help more Providence residents, especially children, receive the dental care they need."

Over 146,000 Rhode Islanders sought health care service through community health centers last year

### **About the Rhode Island Health Center Association**

Rhode Island's nine community health centers served nearly 146,000 Rhode Islanders in 2013 at office locations throughout the state. The health centers have a long history of providing high-quality, low-cost primary health care to Rhode Islanders. They are non-profit, safety-net primary care providers that serve patient populations who otherwise confront financial, geographic, language and cultural barriers accessing health care services. They provide care for Rhode Islanders who are uninsured, underinsured, privately insured and publicly insured.