

PRESS RELEASE
The Honorable Jim Himes
Connecticut's 4th District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Himes, Finch Announce \$5.3 Million to Improve Community Health Care in Bridgeport

BRIDGEPORT, CT—Congressman Jim Himes (CT-4) and Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch today announced a \$5,370,855 grant award to the Southwest Community Health Center (SWCHC) to expand its services to low-income families in greater Bridgeport. The funds were made available as part of the new health reform law.

"If you are unemployed or uninsured in Connecticut, it's gotten more and more difficult to find affordable, high-quality health care," said Congressman Himes. "Southwest Community Health Center has been a lifeline to those in and around Bridgeport who lost coverage or are between jobs. This investment, made possible by our new health reform law, will help many more people get access to the excellent care that Southwest provides."

These federal funds will enable Southwest to build a new multiple-use health center and supportive housing residence. The complex will create 30-40 units of new affordable housing and a health center that will allow SWCHC to house medical, dental, behavioral health and administrative functions in one state-of-the-art facility. The proposed site for the new facility is on Albion Street, one block away from SWCHC's current location, and will be developed in collaboration with the Bridgeport Housing Authority. For the last 33 years, SWCHC has served the Bridgeport community from its location on Bird Street, a 1930s-era school building leased from the Bridgeport Housing Authority (BHA).

"Southwest Community Health Center and the BHA have been longtime partners with the City to provide affordable health care and housing opportunities for our city's residents," said Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch. "This \$5.3 million capital development grant will provide expanded access to health care, supportive housing and job opportunities in our community. I am grateful to Congressman Himes for helping to secure this critical funding for Bridgeport."

Since 1976, SWCHC has served over 918,000 cumulative patients in Bridgeport. They provide comprehensive health care services, including dental, behavioral health and prenatal, and they facilitate the only community-based hepatitis C screening program in Southern Connecticut. SWCHC conducts special outreach to members of the Bridgeport community in greatest need. In 2008, 1,150 homeless persons in Bridgeport were given medical care and 5,495 uninsured patients were seen by medical professionals.

"These funds will allow Southwest Community Health Center to complete the construction of a new 25,000 sq. ft., state-of-the art facility to serve the residents of Bridgeport's south-end neighborhoods," said Katherine Yacavone, President and CEO of SWCHC. "We are grateful for Congressman Himes and Mayor Finch's support in securing these funds. When finished, this facility will have over 40,000 visits each year. In real terms, that is what this funding means - 40,000 community health clinic visits will stay in this neighborhood and available to the citizens of Bridgeport regardless of whether they have health insurance."

With the economic downturn forcing many community health centers to operate at or above full capacity, these funds will be directed specifically for construction and renovation projects which will increase the number of patients seen and expand the scope of services provided. These grants, part of the Capital Development (CD) program administered by HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), build on the more than \$2 billion investment in community health centers in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. SWCHC received \$801,000 in June 2009 through the Recovery Act. The funds announced today bring the total investment in this project to over \$6 million and will allow SWCHC to preserve and expand health services for the community, save health center jobs, create new construction jobs, and complete all phases of this unique housing/health project.

"This is wonderful news. I am extremely pleased for our partner Southwest Community Health that they received this grant," said Nicholas Calace, Executive Director of the Bridgeport Housing Authority. "The completion of this medical facility is a major event for the City, and especially for this neighborhood, which includes over 1000 Housing Authority residents. This federal support will ensure that the unique health and supportive housing initiative Southwest and the Bridgeport Housing Authority have developed will be completed."

Over the next five years, the *Affordable Care Act* will provide \$11 billion in funding for the operation, expansion and construction of community health centers like SWCHC across the country. This expansion of sites and services will help community health centers to serve nearly double the number of patients receiving care, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

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Congressman Jim Himes represents Connecticut's 4th District, which includes the communities of Bridgeport, Darien, Easton, Fairfield, Greenwich, Monroe, New Canaan, Norwalk, Oxford, Redding, Ridgefield, Shelton, Stamford, Trumbull, Weston, Westport, and Wilton.



FEDERAL FUNDING TO COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ALBION ST. HEALTH CENTER

SWCHC HAS RECEIVED **\$5.37 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING** THROUGH THE PATIENT AFFORDABLE CARE ACT CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE FOR BRIDGEPORT RESIDENTS. FUNDS WILL BE USED TO COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART @ **\$8 M ALBION ST. HEALTH CENTER**.

THE **\$5.37 MILLION** WILL BE USED TO CONSTRUCT AN 18,000 SQ. FT. MEDICAL BUILDING TO CONNECT TO A 6,800 SQ. FT. DENTAL CENTER. THE \$2.8 M DENTAL CENTER IS SUPPORTED BY **\$801,000 IN FEDERAL ARRA FUNDING** AND A **\$1.5 M CONSTRUCTION LOAN** FROM **M&T BANK**.

THE TOTAL **\$6,171, 866 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING** WILL ALLOW SWCHC TO CONSTRUCT A **25,000 SQ. FT. HEALTH CENTER** TO DELIVER COMPREHENSIVE MEDICAL, DENTAL, AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES.

THE **ALBION ST. HEALTH CENTER** IS A UNIQUE COLLABORATION WITH THE **BRIDGEPORT HOUSING AUTHORITY**. THE PROJECT WILL PRESERVE AND EXPAND HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY, SAVE HEALTH CENTER JOBS, CREATE CONSTRUCTION JOBS, AND CREATE 35 UNITS OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING.

THE ALBION ST. HEALTH CENTER WILL:

- **CREATE 16 NEW HEALTH CENTER JOBS; 42 NEW CONSTRUCTION JOBS**
- **SAVE 50 HEALTH CENTER JOBS**
- **ATTRACT 2,100 NEW DENTAL PATIENTS**
- **INCREASE DENTAL VISITS BY 6,000 ANNUALLY**
- **INCREASE ADULT MEDICINE VISITS BY 6,000 ANNUALLY**
- **INCREASE PEDIATRIC VISITS BY 4,000 ANNUALLY**
- **ATTRACT 1,200 NEW PEDIATRIC PATIENTS**
- **INCREASE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH VISITS BY 1,800 ANNUALLY**
- **ATTRACT 225 NEW BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PATIENTS**

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www.swchc.org

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