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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER DONS RED IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL HEALTH CENTER FUNDING

TORRINGTON, CT, February 8—Community Health and Wellness Center of Greater Torrington (CHWC) is awaiting word on the legislative vote for health center funding and other programs affected by federal funds. The vote, which takes place on February 8<sup>th</sup>, will determine if the bill is passed to fund community health centers for two more years. Standing in solidarity, employees at both the Torrington and Winsted center locations participated in “Wear Red Day” to show their support continued community health center funding.

“Our staff wore red in hopes that there will be continued support of preserving our funding for the millions of patients community health centers collectively serve across the nation,” said Joanne Borduas, CEO of CHWC. “With federal and state budget cuts, unknowns with funding, and a tough economy, the CHWC staff has continued to dedicate themselves to taking the best care possible of our patients. I am proud of them for standing up for the important work they do and for the patients we serve. I looked out onto a ‘Sea of Red’ in our lobby waiting area.”

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)—which includes CHWC—are community health centers that have been designated by the federal government by adhering to regulations pertaining to the scope and quality of health services provided to anyone, regardless of ability to pay. These centers are vital to the health and wellness of the one in five Americans who use them.

Nationwide there are over 1,400 community health centers, which offer a sliding scale of charges for uninsured and low-income patients. In Connecticut there are 17 Community Health Centers. In 2016, over 376,000 patients from across Connecticut received their care from an FQHC. Of these, approximately 63% were on the state’s HUSKY program (Medicaid) and 16% were uninsured.

The nation’s health centers were funded with \$1.5 billion from discretionary funds, and were provided with \$3.6 billion from the CHCF. However, this fund expired on September 30, 2017, leaving America’s health center organizations facing a 70% cutback in program funding if Congress doesn’t act. This has been called the “Funding Cliff.”

On January 22, Congress passed a short-term spending package to end the government shutdown, and keep it running through February 8<sup>th</sup>. However, this agreement did not include

funding for community health centers or the National Health Service Corps. In order for federal funds to be appropriated, they must be passed by both the House of Representative and the Senate, and then signed by the President.

“We have been working together here at CHWC to ensure that we are doing our part to secure the center’s existence so that we can carry out our mission of caring for a community in need of high-quality, patient-centered services,” says Borduas. “I feel confident in our highly-skilled, caring team to continuing to meet any challenges and serve the community, regardless of the outcome of the vote.”

### **ABOUT COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER**

The Community Health & Wellness Center of Greater Torrington is committed to keeping communities healthy. The center, its employees, volunteer practitioners, board members, officer, and independent contractors are deemed to be employees of the Federal Public Health and Human Services.

In a compassionate, patient-centered environment, CHWC services are accessible and provided without discriminations, with cultural competence, and where all people matter regardless of their ability to pay.

CHWC offers and continues to develop a range of healthcare services for the underserved throughout northwest Connecticut, including medical, dental, and counseling services. It strives to achieve the reputation of “provider of choice” for affordable, high quality services that achieve positive patient outcomes in a welcoming and caring environment.

CHWC collaborates and advocates with other organizations to increase the region’s capacity to meet the communities’ health and wellness needs.

CHWC is located at 469 Migeon Avenue, Torrington, CT, and 115 Spencer Street, Winsted, CT, with the following satellite locations: FISH of Torrington, 332 South Main Street, Torrington; Sullivan Senior Center, 88 East Albert Street, Torrington, CT; The Open Door Soup Kitchen, 160 Main Street, Winsted; Torrington Soup Kitchen, 220 Prospect Street, Torrington; and Oliver Wolcott Technical School, 75 Oliver Street, Torrington.

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