

For Immediate Release

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**COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS OF PINELLAS TO RECEIVE \$350 THOUSAND
IN FEDERAL GRANTS**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded funding to expand oral health services and improve oral health outcomes for its patients

St Petersburg, Fla. (Thursday, June 23, 2016) – Community Health Centers of Pinellas (CHCP) announced today it's been awarded \$350,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to expand integrated oral health care services and increase the number of patients served in the community at its Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center located in Midtown St. Petersburg at the Historic Mercy Hospital site.

With this funding, CHCP will expand their patient capacity by hiring a new dentist and support staff and increasing hours of operation at the Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center dental office (1344 22nd Street South, St Petersburg, 33712; 727-824-8181). This will allow increased access to dental care and education, increasing awareness of the connection between oral health and overall health.

“Community Health Centers of Pinellas is thrilled to continue its efforts to expand access to affordable, high quality care. This is another example of addressing the unmet needs in this community; where there has been a significant increase in young children using the ER from 247 in 2011 to 395 in 2012 at a cost of nearly \$1.8 million,” said Pat Mabe, CEO/President. Mrs. Mabe went on to offer that “our goal at CHCP is to increase access to dental services to prevent ER visits: hiring a new dentist, going from 2 evenings a week to 4 evenings and having a full day on Fridays.” “This will really improve access to dental services,” concluded Mrs. Mabe.

Dr. Nichelle Threadgill, CMO offered that “the added benefit and purpose of the additional dentist is to focus on improved integration of medical patients into dental care; enhancing the patients overall health experience. While we will be able to see more patients, the goal is to make sure that the individual, whether a child or adult, who is getting medical care receives dental care and vice versa – taking care of the whole person. This fits right into CHCP’s certified medical home model of care.”

About Community Health Centers of Pinellas, Inc.

For the past 31 years, CHCP has been working to improve the health and well-being of people in the community by providing quality healthcare services to medically underserved communities in Pinellas County.

CHCP began in 1985 as Johnnie Ruth Clarke Health Center. The facility was named in honor of Johnnie Ruth Clarke, a civil rights activist and pioneer in the fight against sickle cell anemia. Today, CHCP is a critical healthcare delivery system providing services to insured and to uninsured patients based on a sliding fee scale, with 10 locations throughout Pinellas County. For more information about CHCP, visit www.chcpinellas.org.

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