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NEW VALLEY DENTAL CLINIC NEARS COMPLETION TO BE DEDICATED TO THE LATE SENATOR RICHARD O. BELDEN

May 14, 2008 -- In March 2006, TEAM, Inc. found itself unable to obtain dental care for many of the preschool children in their Head Start program who required attention. They decided to convene the first meeting of Valley Service Providers that included Birmingham Group Health Services, Naugatuck Valley Health Department, Hill Health Corporation, Griffin Hospital, VARCA, Valley Legal Services, Women's Health Access, Head Start Parents and Staff, Dr. Ronald Linden of White Hills Family Dentistry and the late State Representative Richard Belden to discuss the lack of access to dental service faced by the low-income families in the area's communities.

In 2006 in the six-town Lower Naugatuck Valley, only two dentists accepted Medicaid, by which many low-income people cover a dental visit. The Hill Health Dental Clinic located in a Griffin Hospital facility in Derby operated only part-time and had a long waiting list with only the capacity to serve 2 patients at a time.

The low number of nonprofit and participating private providers imputed that a multitude of Valley residents' dental problems were largely untreated. The data suggested they included some 9,510 on HUSKY A (7% of the Valley population) participants, 543 SAGA clients, and up to 14,600 other uninsured persons. These figures did not include a

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significant number of people on Medicare (which does not cover dental) or disabled people on Medicaid. The reality was that the State's dental reimbursement rate under the HUSKY/Medicaid programs hadn't been adjusted in over fifteen years and was a fraction of the actual market dentistry costs.

Even understanding that such access problems limit their chance for care, data shows that lower-income children and adults face more dental problems than the general population. According to the CT Health Foundation, low-income children, due to poor nutrition, are much more likely to suffer tooth decay than children from more affluent and middle class backgrounds. Low-income adults suffer dental problems at twice the rate of higher income persons.

Because of these circumstances, the discussions of the Valley Service Providers evolved into planning for an expanded new dental clinic (expanding from two chairs to six chairs and a lab) on the second floor of TEAM's headquarters at 30 Elizabeth Street, Derby to be operated by the Hill Health Corporation, a Federally Qualified Health Center.

In September of 2006 with the advocacy of the late Senator Richard Belden, TEAM applied to the State of CT. for State Bond Funds to renovate a vacant 2nd floor into a dental clinic as well as space for the expansion of Behavioral Health Service programs for children, which are operated by the LNV Parent Child Resource Center. A State grant was approved in March 30, 2007 for the construction project. It was soon followed by funding from the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven; a grant from the Connecticut Health Foundation; the donation of six new chairs from United Healthcare; and a grant from the Ronald McDonald House. More recently a personal commitment of \$10,000 from Reuben Mark, Chairman of the Colgate Palmolive Company was received along with a \$10,000 commitment from the Colgate Palmolive Company. In addition, furniture donations were received from the American Honda Motor Corp. and Annie Casey Family Services. As a result of these allocations and gifts, the project is nearing completion.

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The new clinic to be operated by Hill Health Corporation of New Haven will offer full-time clinic hours and affordable treatment to children and adults who lack a dental home, with the goal of serving individuals and uninsured persons without access to traditional dental care of the Lower Naugatuck Valley region. Among its comprehensive services, the dental clinic will provide fillings, adult and child prophylaxis, emergency care, and oral screenings. A children's dentist will be available as well as a dental operator for handicapped individuals. The Clinic will accept all forms of insurance, including Medicaid and SAGA, and have a sliding fee schedule for those without dental insurance.

On June 10, 2008 at 10:00 A.M., a formal dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony that will feature the Lt. Governor Michael Fedele and Mrs. Bertha Belden will be held to formally dedicate the new clinic to the memory of the late State Representative Richard Belden. The new clinic will be named the "Richard O. Belden Dental Clinic" in honor of the late Representative's dedication and commitment to the expansion of dental services for those most in need. It will become part of the Hill Health Corp. system of regional health services.

Individuals interested in scheduling an appointment may call Hill Health Corp's current Derby office at (203) 736-5460.

For more information regarding the dental clinic expansion project or the dedication ceremony please contact Diane Stroman, Vice President of Development, TEAM, Inc. At (203) 736-5420 ext. 1234

TEAM Inc. is a private, 501©3 non-profit corporation whose mission is to connect individuals and families with solutions that lead to well-being, self-sufficiency and full participation in the community. It aims to achieve its mission by conducting activities that address the needs of economically disadvantaged individuals and families including resource mobilization, education, advocacy and service delivery. TEAM programs serve the communities of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethany, Derby, Milford, Orange, Oxford, Shelton, Seymour and Woodbridge.

