

## ECHN, MCC partner to offer health services

By David Huck

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MANCHESTER — Eastern Connecticut Health Network and Manchester Community College have announced an agreement that will give students and staff access to a wide-range of primary-care services both on and off campus.

Officials hope the agreement will improve students' health and awareness of ways to stay healthy, providing quick and easy access to basic care services beginning this fall.

Doctors from ECHN, which has several locations throughout Hartford and Tolland counties, will be on MCC's campus 2½ days a week to provide medical screening and primary care to students. The team will also provide referrals for off-campus specialists.

The medical staff will use space in the Great Path Academy Building.

Most MCC students have medical insurance that will cover the cost of their care, but financial "accommodations" will be made for the uninsured so no one seeking care is turned away, college spokesman Adam Jeamel said.

College officials are expecting the demand for health services to increase at certain times of the year when immunizations and physicals

are needed for admission. Officials say having access to medical care on a community college campus is a unique opportunity and an alternative to a walk-in clinic or an emergency room.

Duncan Harris, MCC's dean of student affairs, said he expects the new partnership will help raise the college's "overall health IQ" by providing an ongoing source of health and wellness information through individual counseling and community workshops. Other services may be added, he said.

MCC believes in a "holistic approach to success," and promoting student health is an important component of achieving overall academic success, Harris said.

About 80 percent of MCC's 7,500 students are under the age of 30, with 40 percent coming from Manchester, East Hartford, Vernon, and South Windsor.

"This unique 'health center without walls' concept firmly establishes ECHN's presence in the campus community and bolsters what has been a strong, growing, and successful relationship for the college and our health system," ECHN Medical Director David Neuhaus said.

The idea for the on-campus medical service grew out of conversations between the two institutions, Harris said. MCC previously had a nurse on duty but the position was eliminated due to budget cuts.

