

FEBRUARY 2023



# COMMUNITY BENEFIT REPORT



## CONNECTICUT HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS BUILDING A HEALTHIER CONNECTICUT

Connecticut hospitals and health systems provide nationally recognized care – and much more. Their work takes them beyond the hospital walls to improve the health of those who live in their communities. Through community benefit programs that encompass a wide range of services, hospitals and health systems respond to the critical needs of patients and communities. Housing, food insecurity, transportation, and employment continue to be areas of unmet need that hospitals are addressing individually and collaboratively through CHA.

To build a healthier Connecticut, hospitals are committed to enhancing collaboration among providers and community-based organizations to address the social influencers of health, improve health equity, and reduce disparities that lead to poor clinical outcomes.

Hospitals contribute to community well-being in many ways, by providing uncompensated, subsidized, and free health services, contributing to research, and supporting community health improvement



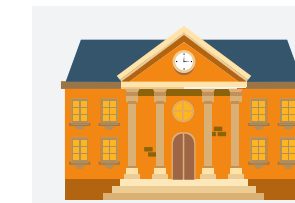
and community building activities. In 2021, the value of these types of community contributions was approximately \$2.7 billion statewide.

## FY 2021 COMMUNITY BENEFIT BY THE NUMBERS



**\$31.5 MILLION**

Community health improvement services and operations

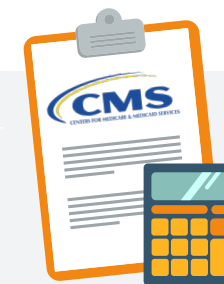


**\$233.7 MILLION**

Health Professions Education

**\$6 MILLION**

Subsidized health services to provide care needed by the community



**\$993 MILLION**

Unpaid hospital care provided to Medicaid beneficiaries

**\$1.12 BILLION**

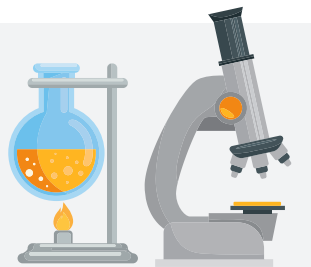
Unpaid hospital care provided to Medicare beneficiaries

**\$8.2 MILLION**

Community building to create stronger, healthier communities

**\$7.6 MILLION**

Research and other programs to advance healthcare for patients and the community



**\$243.8 MILLION**

Uncompensated care: Charity care/bad debt to provide services for those who cannot pay

**\$23.9 MILLION**

Donations to help support community organizations



**TOTAL COMMUNITY INVESTMENT: \$2.7 BILLION**

These data represent the most recently audited fiscal year, 2021, as reported to CHA by members.

## Meeting Community Health Need

**BACKUS HOSPITAL**  
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Backus Hospital recently unveiled a state-of-the-art, 10-bed private Behavioral Health Crisis Unit adjacent to its emergency department to improve patient experience.

The 3,740-square-foot space was designed with the safety, privacy and comfort of patients in mind.

“Put yourself in a situation where you are having your worst day, and you can come to a place where you have your own private

room, peace and quiet, where you are respected, and where you are not telling your story right next to someone behind a curtain,” said Kyle McClain, MD, Backus Chief of Emergency Services. “It took a lot of years, it took a large investment, but this is what our community needed and we are rising to the challenge.”

James O’Dea, PhD, Senior Vice President of the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network, said there is an explosion of mental health and substance use issues, but only 4 out of 10 patients who need care can get it, even though their conditions are largely treatable.

“This crisis happening right now in our country regarding mental health and substance abuse has never been more compelling,” Dr. O’Dea said. “It’s never been more important for us to create access points for people to get involved in care. And we know that when we provide really good behavioral healthcare, we see impacts, not



just improvements in our patients and communities, we also see the rest of their health conditions improve when you treat underlying health conditions.

Backus Vice President of Patient Care Services Colleen Desai, RN, said a recent Community Health Needs Assessment showed that behavioral health was among the top healthcare issues in eastern Connecticut.

“We’ve listened to what the community needs are, and we are extremely proud to be in a position to address those needs,” Desai said. “With this unit, we provide an even safer, more dignified experience for our patients who have access to high-quality, coordinated care in a more comfortable and therapeutic environment. This will help them recover more quickly.”

## A Day of Emergency Medical Training for Bridgeport’s Central High School Students

**BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL**  
YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

A team from the Yale New Haven Center for EMS provided training and American Heart Association (Heartsaver CPR/AED) certifications for 32 students after they completed a full day of training in the Central High School Library/Media Center.

Scott Martus, Program Manager for the center, coordinated the day with Martha Judd, Government/Community Relations Coordinator, and Carmen Marietta-Francisco, teacher and advisor to the Central High School HOSA-Future Health Professionals Club. HOSA is a global student-led organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services and several federal and state agencies. Its mission is to empower young people to become leaders in the global health community through education, collaboration, and experience. HOSA actively promotes career opportunities in the healthcare industry and enhances the delivery of quality healthcare to all people.

Besides teaching valuable, life-saving skills, certification also allowed several students to work at jobs such as camp counselors and school program staff over the summer.

After the day of training and encouragement from the EMS trainers, at least four students expressed interest in becoming EMTs. One student completed her EMS classroom training over the summer.

“Parents are ecstatic to see the students completing these certifications and the opportunities that Yale New Haven Health



has provided to these students,” said Carmen Marietta-Francisco, teacher and advisor to the CHS HOSA-Future Health Professionals Club. “You, Community/Government Relations Coordinator Martha Judd, and the people of Yale New Haven Health are godsend to us. When people say, ‘It takes

a village,’ they do not know how the people of Yale New Haven Health support this village outside their everyday hospital and EMS duties. The community should know how much Yale New Haven Health cares about the community.”

“You have no idea how grateful I am and how grateful our students are to have the support of Yale New Haven Health staff and the EMT trainers, including Martha Judd for her continued support and advocacy for Central High School students,” Marietta-Francisco added. “Many of our students would not be able to train or obtain certification because of these difficult financial times for everyone.”

In addition to the EMS training, two Zoom webinars were held for HOSA Club students during 2022. The first Zoom presentation was offered by Bridgeport Hospital’s Talent Acquisition Department and focused on resumes, interviewing skills, and job opportunities, including the necessary educational requirements.

The second Zoom discussion involved various Bridgeport Hospital and Northeast Medical Group professionals, including registered nurses, a physical therapist and a medical assistant. The healthcare professionals provided background about their careers, what type of education is needed as well as high school coursework helpful for their future plans as healthcare professionals.

## Bristol Health Increases Community Benefit Through Targeted Effort

**BRISTOL HEALTH**

Delivering quality care to the community is at the center of everything Bristol Health does. That care doesn’t only take place inside the walls of Bristol Health but also in the heart of the communities it serves. Bristol Health’s goal is always to find a way to address the community’s needs by delivering on its vision of “Advancing the health of our community by providing integrated, innovative, and individualized care” through the mission of *Caring Today for Your Tomorrow*.

With the greater-Bristol community and its needs in mind, Bristol Health took a more thoughtful approach to community benefit activities. Physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers engaged in community events and outreach initiatives to bring care and education outside of the four walls. This allowed Bristol Health to increase community benefits by 290% in comparison to the previous fiscal year.

Taking a grassroots approach to community benefits allows improved access to care and get patients re-engaged in their care after the pandemic. Several Bristol Health physicians and other medical professionals stepped out of their offices and practices



to provide health screenings such as blood pressure, blood sugar, and balance checks at multiple community health fairs. Bristol Health partnered with the Bristol-Burlington Health District at the community baby shower, where Bristol Health Pediatrics helped answer parents’ questions about their pediatric care needs. Staff from the ambulatory care practices attended several events this year such as the Bristol and Southington Farmers Markets where community members had an opportunity to schedule an appointment and learn about the quality care available to them.

At larger annual community events, such as the Bristol Mum Festival and Bristol’s West End Association Rockwell Park Summer Festival, a variety of advanced specialty

care providers attended with the goal of connecting community members directly with the services Bristol Health can provide. The ability to schedule an appointment and receive complimentary health screenings was also available at these events.

The increase in Bristol Health’s community benefit in the fiscal year 2022 was directly connected to the thoughtful grassroots approach of providing community members with ready access to Bristol Health’s full suite of services across the continuum of care. Bristol Health will continue to deliver on its mission of *Caring Today for Your Tomorrow* through this thoughtful approach to meeting the community where they are and continuing to provide the necessary tools to meet their healthcare needs.

## Reducing Food Insecurity

### THE HOSPITAL OF CENTRAL CONNECTICUT HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Here's something you may not know — it's estimated that 40% of all food in the United States goes to waste, according to hunger relief organization Feeding America.

The Hospital of Central Connecticut (HOCC) team has been doing its part to make a small dent in that statistic thanks to its partnership with the Salvation Army in New Britain. As of July 29, 2022, HOCC donated 804 pounds of food, which all goes directly to the Salvation Army's Men's Shelter.

"It's opened colleagues' eyes and has gotten everyone excited to contribute to the community,"

said Joseph Spooner, executive chef for food and nutrition at HOCC, who is heavily involved in the food donation process. "Every Friday, the Salvation Army comes to the hospital and picks up the food we've set aside for them throughout the week."

The idea for this partnership came from Hartford HealthCare's food vendor, Compass One.

Connecticut Foodshare then became involved to help HOCC identify an organization for donations through a methodical vetting process. That's when the Salvation Army's Men's Shelter was identified. It's important to note that all donated food never leaves the hospital kitchen and is strictly screened before being donated.

"We've been able to set up this program and help men in the community by not only giving them a meal, but also helping them get their life back in order," said Whitney Bundy, Senior Director of Guest Services for Hartford HealthCare.

She explained that after learning that the Salvation Army has a program called Pathway to Hope, which helps men in the shelter find employment, Hartford HealthCare's talent acquisition team stepped in.

"They now work with the program and have been able to hire men from the shelter to join our food and nutrition team," Bundy said.

HOCC's food donation program has served as an example for other facilities at Hartford HealthCare, with St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport recently launching a similar program donating 329 pounds of food in the first few months.

"This really is a win-win for everyone involved," Spooner said.



### CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S A Pipeline to Improve Academic, Health, and Life Outcomes for North Hartford Children

Connecticut Children's received its largest grant ever in 2021 when the U.S. Department of Education selected the organization as one of seven grantees across the country to receive funding from the Promise Neighborhoods Program. Under the five-year grant, Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health (the Office) will receive \$30 million to lead a multi-partner, cross-sector effort designed to improve the educational, health, and life outcomes of children in North Hartford.

Under the grant, the Office will oversee an effort to design, implement, and evaluate the North Hartford Ascend Pipeline (Ascend) in collaboration

with the City of Hartford, Hartford Public Schools, and additional partners. Ascend will serve as a comprehensive cradle-to-career effort designed to help children in three North Hartford neighborhoods – Clay Arsenal, Northeast, and Upper Albany – reach their full potential by improving academic outcomes, developmental trajectories, long-term well-being, and quality of life.

Ascend began its ambitious efforts by:

- Launching a series of monthly Community Conversations that bring together community residents with leaders of Ascend to share input on the project and ensure community voices are represented;
- Building a governance and leadership structure that embeds resident voices at all levels;
- Inviting Geoffrey Canada, the renowned education reformer and founder of the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), to speak to residents and Ascend leaders about best practices developed by the HCZ that can be replicated in Promise Neighborhoods-funded programs

"We have a tremendous opportunity to build a comprehensive system to strengthen families and ensure optimal academic, occupational, and quality of life outcomes for their children," said Paul H. Dworkin, MD, Connecticut Children's Executive Vice President for Community Child Health.

Throughout Ascend, equity is a driving force behind all leadership, governance and programmatic decisions. As community partners work together to build a comprehensive system of programs and services for children and families, they will strive to eliminate disparities in outcomes based on race, ethnicity, disabilities and other factors. The project will address academic, social, economic, and health inequities that have long existed and were further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Addressing Mental Health Needs With Recovery Coaches

### DANBURY HOSPITAL/NEW MILFORD CAMPUS NUVANCE HEALTH

Substance use disorder remains a major issue of concern across Connecticut where an alarming number of people of all ages and walks of life are suffering from addiction and alcoholism. Community health needs assessments continue to highlight this scourge affecting so many in our service area. Staff continue to provide compassionate care servicing individuals struggling with drug addiction or alcoholism. We want patients to know they are not alone in their suffering.

As individuals present to the emergency department, Crisis Intervention team members and clinical staff work to triage, treat, and stabilize the patient. At this important juncture, the patient is approached about options for next steps care including referral to inpatient care, discharge to outpatient care, and programming, including the option

of assistance from a Recovery Coach. The Recovery Coach program is a proven model provided to hundreds of patients free of charge. This non-billed service connects the patient to a trained para-professional to help support the patient in achieving their individual health goals. Recovery Coaches are a form of peer support. They involve the process of giving and receiving non-clinical assistance to support long-term recovery from substance use disorders.

In addition to other supportive programming, this service is available for 10-30 days providing an important safety net for patients at a very vulnerable time.

Danbury and New Milford hospitals are committed to improving the health of communities regardless of the person's insurance status or their ability to pay for care provided.

## Helping Diabetic Patients Take Charge of Their Health

### DAY KIMBALL HEALTHCARE

For the millions of people living with diabetes, it can be especially challenging to manage the disease. Diabetes is the 8th leading cause of death in Connecticut, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2020 data. To address this in Northeastern Connecticut, Day Kimball Medical Group (DKMG), a division of Day Kimball Healthcare (DKH), is proud to offer diabetes management as part of an enhanced coordinated care program among its primary care providers and through an expansion of its specialty care services with the establishment of a new endocrinology service line to help patients manage a variety of endocrine and metabolic disorders.

The community in Connecticut’s northeast corner now has access to a multidisciplinary team approach for diabetes care with comprehensive case management and individualized treatment plans, close to home. Day Kimball’s expert team includes a board-certified and fellowship-trained endocrinologist with over 20 years of clinical experience in endocrinology and metabolism, as well as a full-time registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator to provide education and instruction about how to perform diabetic self-care, including the importance of home blood glucose-testing, how nutrition and exercise impact diabetes, strategies for lifestyle modifications, and modalities based on the individual needs of each patient.

Additionally, Day Kimball’s registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator provide a more defined educational program to pre-diabetic patients in an effort to avoid a patient being diagnosed with diabetes and the associated aftereffects of the disease.

Currently, Day Kimball follows approximately 2,300 adolescents and adults living with Type I or Type II diabetes, pre-diabetes, or gestational diabetes to manage their condition and maintain their health. Specialized care plans are developed by providers with goals mutually developed with patient input. Nurse Care Coordinators work with patients on an individualized basis to ensure each patient receives a personalized treatment plan.

Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) is a key step in preventing diabetes complications. According to the CDC, there is considerable evidence of positive changes in health behaviors and improved diabetes-related outcomes as a result of participation in a DSMES program. Over the past year, Day Kimball’s outpatient DSMES program has held nearly 35 group classes for adult diabetics to help them manage their disease with a focus on nutrition, exercise, medication management, behavior change, and goal setting.

In addition, Day Kimball’s diabetes nutrition and education programs have counseled and supported more than 360 patients of all ages to improve their health through better nutrition by managing their weight, improving their diets and managing chronic diseases, including diabetes. Furthermore, the diabetes care team at Day Kimball has treated more than 200 patients for new and pre-diabetic visits, including follow-ups. Through this work, Day Kimball is making progress towards becoming an American Diabetes Association Accredited DSMES site to help meet the educational needs of the local community.

## Parish Nurse Program Helps Build Healthier Communities

### GREENWICH HOSPITAL YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

The Parish Nurse program – a partnership initiated 24 years ago between Greenwich Hospital and the First Congregational Church of Greenwich – continues today as a model example of how healthcare organizations can help build healthier communities.

The program began when the senior minister sought a registered nurse to complement his pastoral care team by holistically treating the mind, body, and soul. Since then, the parish nurse has played an integral role in maintaining the health of parishioners and the surrounding community through outreach education, lectures, health counseling, screenings, home visits, hospital visits, and more.

Sue Asselin, RN, has been the First Congregational Church parish nurse for 18 years. She has a bachelor’s degree in community public health and over 30 years of experience in home care and hospice. She works

with First Congregational Church, serving as a confidant, educator, and liaison between the church and hospital and community-based organizations to provide resources to over 1,100 parishioners.

Asselin meets with parishioners by appointment and on Sundays after church services to conduct blood pressure screenings (about 150 screenings a year) and provide confidential health counseling services to individuals about specific health or social concerns. Each year, Asselin conducts approximately 30 hospital and skilled nursing facility visits when parishioners require inpatient care; and 25 home visits to assess well-being and recommend interventions and resources that improve health and safety.

She also assists with referrals to hospital and community resources, such as outpatient services, labs, medical specialists, home care agencies, the Town of Greenwich Department of Health and Human Services, food sources (Meals on Wheels, Neighbor to Neighbor), senior services, and medical equipment loan organizations.



The parish nurse collaborates with the church’s Wellness Committee to offer educational programs focusing on healthy lifestyles, injury prevention, bone health, stress reduction, quality sleep, sun safety, advanced directives, end-of-life planning, navigating Medicare enrollment plans, and stroke and heart attack awareness. She also refers individuals to the church’s volunteer Caring Ministry Committee, which assists those who are homebound or experiencing illness or loss. Under the leadership of Asselin and the Wellness Committee, the church purchased an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) and provided free training to staff, ushers, Sunday

school teachers and volunteers in the use of this life-saving device.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Asselin organized church staff and volunteers to make wellness checks via telephone to vulnerable parishioners to ensure they had access to food, medicines and socialization. Parishioners received weekly emails (“From the Parish Nurse”) with updated CDC recommendations, quarantining tips and availability of testing sites. She also assisted parishioners with online registration for COVID-19 vaccines. Video messages were posted on the church’s YouTube channel and printed copies of the emails were mailed to individuals who did not have access to email. Support groups and health education lectures were offered via Zoom.

The success of the Parish Nurse program for more than two decades demonstrates how a healthcare organization can make a significant impact by promoting physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being services to support community residents in their efforts to lead healthier lives.

## Griffin Health “Recharges” Ansonia Armory, Community Health

### GRIFFIN HEALTH

Griffin Health partnered with The City of Ansonia to renovate a historical “hub of health” to help promote community physical and social well-being as the COVID-19 pandemic eased.

On December 22, 2021, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, state and local elected officials, area business leaders and players from the Harlem Wizards exhibition basketball team unveiled the newly renovated Ansonia Armory gym. The celebration featured a performance by the Wizards for Derby and Ansonia families and a unique



“recharging” of the gym in which guests tested the gym’s unique lightning bolt button that sets off a thunderous recording and flashing lights.

The renovation project was spearheaded by Griffin Health with critical engineering and manufacturing support from Stratford-based Lockheed Martin/Sikorsky, and financial assistance from local businesses and the Ion Bank Foundation.

The idea for the renovation came when Griffin held one of its most successful series of vaccination clinics at the Armory, providing more than 4,000 vaccines to Ansonia residents and making massive strides to protect the community from the devastating virus.

The state of the Armory was dreadful especially considering it is a location where children play and elderly hold winter walking sessions. The ceiling was leaking, mold was pervasive, the basketball court

floor boards were buckled and warped, which made dribbling on the uneven surface difficult. Since the Armory is a primary location for social interaction and recreational activity in the Valley, Griffin leadership felt compelled to safeguard this vital contributor to the health and well-being of its neighbors. This restoration project provides a benefit equal in importance to Griffin’s many investments in community outreach, including purchasing fresh produce and proteins to ensure that residents who rely on the Valley community’s five food pantries have access to highly nutritious food that is health enhancing.

Additionally, the Ansonia Armory renovation plays a role in positive redevelopment in the surrounding area, spurring investment in rehabilitating buildings such as the former Valley YMCA building and improvements to North Main Street and State Street buildings and infrastructures.

To Griffin, the Ansonia Armory renovation is an opportunity to provide more than just traditional medical care to improve the quality of life for the residents of the Lower Naugatuck Valley. Investing in the positive social influences of health will help build a stronger, healthier, and more connected community.

## Promoting Wellness Through Nutrition

### HARTFORD HOSPITAL HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

To help combat food insecurity and chronic diet-related disease in the Hartford region, Hartford Hospital's Food4Health Clinic works closely with doctors and patients to provide healthy, fresh food.

In partnership with FoodShare, Hartford Hospital opened a Food4Health facility, with healthy fruits and vegetables filling the shelves. Patients who are prescribed a visit by their healthcare provider shop for canned goods, leafy greens, root vegetables, grains, beans, rice, almond milk, eggs and more.

"Healthy living requires healthy eating," said Greg Jones, Vice President of Community Health and Engagement, Hartford HealthCare. "The Food4Health Clinic is an anchor for our Food is Medicine strategy, which focuses on healthy eating. It is important that we make nutritious food available to the most underserved among us."

Cunegundo Vergara, MD, Director of the Hartford Hospital Community Health and Adult Primary Care Clinic, prescribes the program to many patients to help combat diets high in cholesterol and sugar.



"We tried farmer's markets and vouchers for healthy foods, but it is hard to quantify the results," he said. "This provides a link to a clinician, so we can measure results over time and see if there are improvements."

The clinic is part of an evolving call for healthcare to promote a wellness model and be more proactive about health. Dr. Vergara said it will take time to measure the impact, but he hopes the program provides access to

healthy eating choices, meal planning, and nutritional advice.

Towanda Mobley, of Manchester, was referred by the bariatric clinic.

"The prices are high at a regular grocery store. It hinders us from eating healthy, limits our access to healthy foods," she said, adding that her family of four tried new foods like brussel sprouts, squash, and green beans.

She comes weekly to get fresh fruits and vegetables, talk about meal prep and get new recipes. In the process, she has lost weight and feels more energetic. The shopping option, she said, has also eased her stress because she knows she can meal plan and get healthy foods.

In the fall, the program had more than 120 active patients visiting an average of twice a month.

Richard Dumont, of Hartford, was referred by the advanced heart failure clinic.

"The people here are great. I've been taking their advice and I plan to keep coming here," he said, noting that his blood pressure and A1c levels were down and he had lost about 11 pounds with the dietary change and learning to read food labels.

## Providing the Right Care, in the Right Setting

### CHARLOTTE HUNGERFORD HOSPITAL HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

To address areas identified by the Community Health Needs Assessment, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital (CHH) started a pilot program to try to reduce patient use of the emergency room for concerns that might be treated more efficiently in other settings.

The Northwest Community Care Team is modeled after similar programs in Waterbury and Danbury, and CHH colleagues met with organizers in those locations to learn more about how the programs work.

Carla Angevine, CHH Manager of Community Health and Health Promotion, said the program is geared to listen to patients and take their needs into account.

"Our goal is to assist them so they can get the appropriate care, at the appropriate time, in the appropriate place," she said.

Organizers hope this will help patients to be more successful and lead to fewer inappropriate emergency room visits. The program is for people who have been to the emergency room 10 or more times in six months or had five ambulance calls within six months.

"We want patients to get the care they need, but also to hopefully reduce unnecessary costs for them as well," said Tasha LaViera, CHH community health worker.

Erinne Houton, CHH Vice President of Patient Care Services, said the program renews the connection it has enjoyed for many years with Community Health and Wellness.

"It is a great collaboration for the community. This type of program benefits the entire community, not just the individuals," she said.



In a very individualized approach, LaViera meets with clients to connect them with case management, assess their needs for food, housing or transportation assistance, determine if they need substance use services or a referral to a primary care provider or specialized medical services.

"Our goal is to connect with an average of one new client per month, to start small and connect, really make an impact," Houton said.

## Johnson Memorial Hospital Opens New Geriatric Wellness Unit

### JOHNSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

If left untreated, behavioral health disorders in older adults can lead to diminished functioning, substance use disorder, poor quality of life, increased mortality, and slower healing from physical ailments. As part of Johnson Memorial Hospital's efforts to expand the array of behavioral health services offered in the local community, Johnson has opened the Lillian "Dolly" Santilli Geriatric Wellness Pavilion, a state-of-the-art healing environment for geriatric patients that supports the hospital's commitment to high quality care and an exceptional patient experience.

Often, patients in need of inpatient geriatric-psychiatric services are first seen in a hospital emergency department setting. Once they are stabilized, they are transferred for short-term inpatient care. At Johnson, these patients also benefit from a multi-disciplinary clinical team that utilizes a collaborative approach to behavioral healthcare. Patients also have access to a wellness program designed specifically for geriatric patients.

The opening of the new geriatric wellness unit is part of Johnson's efforts to meet the needs of the local community, with an aging population that is expected to increase by 16% over the next five years. The new unit provides care to appropriate patients from throughout the

Trinity Health Of New England region, including Connecticut and western Massachusetts. It also complements Johnson's ongoing partnership with Athena Health Care Systems, which operates Evergreen Health Care Center located on the hospital's campus. Athena is exploring additional, on-campus expansion opportunities for long-term care, assisted living and senior housing.

The opening of the new Lillian "Dolly" Santilli Geriatric Wellness Pavilion is representative of Johnson Memorial Hospital's commitment to serve as a transforming, healing presence in the local community.



## L+M Hospital Supports Building Stronger Neighborhoods

LAWRENCE + MEMORIAL HOSPITAL  
YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

Every year, as part of its mission to promote health and wellness throughout southeastern Connecticut, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital (L+M) sponsors, develops, and participates in a wide variety of community-based programs and services. Supporting the needs of the people and communities it serves means building a stronger neighborhood. Which is why in June 2022, L+M Hospital was a sponsor of the City of New London's Neighbors Helping

Neighbors Day, a partnership with the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, Freedom Trail Neighborhood, and Ledge Light Health District.

The initiative directly supported the Historic Hempstead Neighborhood, which data on social influencers of health shows to be a community in need of support. "Where you live largely pre-determines your health, education, job level, income, and financial wellness, so we chose the Freedom Trail Neighborhood as the first neighborhood to initiate the Neighbors Helping Neighbor's Day clean-up, because it's our goal to create components of a vibrant community by providing equity of opportunity, safe and healthy housing, community connections and resiliency, neighborhood health, safety, and accessibility. Hopefully this event was just the beginning of improving the neighborhood," said Keishla Mota-Santos, City of New London, Neighborhood Coordinator.



L+M Hospital has been unwavering in its support of the Hempstead Historic District. In 2020, L+M purchased and donated a 0.6-acre site in the Hempstead neighborhood to the City of New London to create a park.

"L+M understands the importance that safe and thriving communities have for our overall health and well-being," said Zakkyya Williams, L+M Hospital Coordinator, Community Relations. "We look to support initiatives like Neighbors Helping Neighbors Day that make a direct impact and demonstrate our commitment to New London."

The clean-up efforts were made possible with the support of volunteers working on various projects such as raking leaves, picking up litter, removing graffiti, and minor landscaping.

"I would say this was a great moment. Not only did I have a chance to meet nice people, but I also had the opportunity to learn more on the history of the neighborhood, the people and the house I live in. I even learned some gardening techniques!" said Yolanda Fitch, L+M Hospital Health Unit Coordinator, who volunteered with her daughter.

## Coming Together to Invest in the Next Generation of Leaders

MANCHESTER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL  
EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEALTH NETWORK

In Spring 2022, the Kappa League, Manchester Rotary, ECHN's Manchester Memorial Hospital, Manchester Public School system, Manchester Community College, and the Manchester Police Department held a two-day Men's Youth Leadership Conference with over 50 high school students from Manchester High School. This collaborative outreach and educational event was designed to empower these students, embrace their strengths and help them to reach their full potential.

These students are looking to the future to determine their next steps toward higher education or career exploration. Taking the time to invest in youth is important to ECHN and the community and we encourage participation in numerous public and social service activities.

Conference presenters included educators, healthcare physicians and nurses, physical fitness providers, leaders, from the banking industry, Manchester Police leaders and college admission representatives. Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity members provided insights, education, and skills needed to compete and succeed in the highly competitive career environment after completing their education. The Manchester Police Department provided training on constitutional rights, encounters with law enforcement, and the benefits of joining the Police Department as a possible career path consideration.

The students enjoyed their time having direct contact and interactions with a wide variety of leaders from their community. The detailed discussions with local community leaders about



optimizing the skills needed to address real-life situations left students with a feeling of encouragement and direction.

To continue this investment and maintain an ongoing relationship with students, we are planning a high and low ropes course day to further build upon the trust between our young leaders and community representatives. Adventure experiences have positive, engaging activities that lead to increased self-confidence, improved leadership and problem-solving skills, the ability to take on responsible risks and the perseverance to overcome challenges and achieve goals.

Manchester Memorial Hospital is proud to partner with numerous local organizations in this activity that are interested and devoted to youth development. This developmental work represents an extension of a vision to strengthen the health and well-being of the community. This effort further demonstrates the mission we live out each day through focused volunteerism, which is central to the collective success as a community.

## Middlesex Health Addresses Maternal Health Disparities

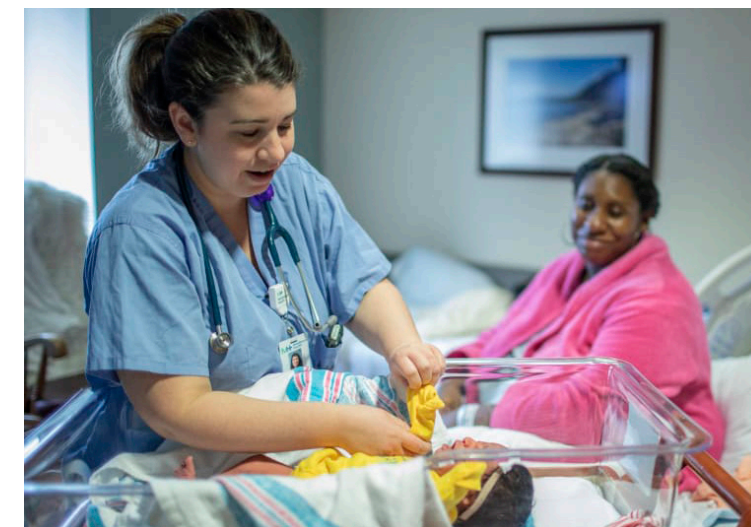
MIDDLESEX HEALTH

Pregnant with Possibilities is a Greater Middletown Area Health Enhancement Community program that is overseen by the Ministerial Health Fellowship. Middlesex Health is a collaborative partner.

The program was developed to address the significant disparities in pregnancy and birth outcomes among Black, indigenous, Latina and other people of color.

Middlesex Health was the lead grant writer for the proposal that secured funding for this program, with all of the grant money managed by the Ministerial Health Fellowship, a faith-based healthcare advocacy network dedicated to highlighting health disparities, advocating for meaningful advancement in health equity, and implementing critical community-based health and well-being programs.

The funding for Pregnant with



Possibilities comes from the Connecticut Office of Health Strategy by way of the U.S. Office of Minority Health.

Pregnant With Possibilities relies on doulas to increase access and improve health outcomes for Black, indigenous, Latina and other people of color and their babies. Through Pregnant with Possibilities, doulas are trained and provide continuous physical,

emotional, and informational support to pregnant people and their loved ones as they help to achieve a healthy and satisfying pregnancy and birthing experience.

Doula support for a birth is an example of evidence-based care. Doulas become part of the pregnant person's care team, and everyone works together to ensure that their participants

have a healthy and successful pregnancy and birth.

Through Pregnant with Possibilities, doulas provide free, individualized, comprehensive services before delivery, during delivery and up to one year after. Pregnant with Possibilities' doulas accompany program participants to medical appointments and are present during births that take place at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. The doulas also connect program participants to needed resources and services; help secure cribs, strollers, car seats, breast-pumps and other necessary items; and support the needs of other family members. Additionally, doula support is provided in English and Spanish.

The Pregnant with Possibilities program has seen strong participant satisfaction and excellent birth weights for the babies who have benefited from this program.

## Developing the Healthcare Workforce of the Future

MIDSTATE MEDICAL CENTER  
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

MidState Medical Center’s partnership with H.C. Wilcox Technical High School in Meriden provides real-world training for students interested in healthcare careers and opens volunteer avenues for them at the hospital.

The program, called Healthcare Exploration, connects professionals from MidState with sophomores and seniors at the school, said Nicole Kaczmarczyk, Manager for Guest and Volunteer Services in Hartford HealthCare’s Central Region.

“The students are all vetted through volunteer services and they go through our orientation program,” Kaczmarczyk said. “They receive credit for their hospital hours, and we have been able to retain some of them for our regular volunteer program. It’s a win for both the students and, of course, our volunteer program.”

In grade 10, students are introduced to five health science career clusters: therapeutic services, diagnostic services, health information, support services, and biotechnology research and development. Instruction is provided in anatomy and physiology, fundamental healthcare skills, professional communication skills for healthcare, the relationship of human behavior throughout the lifespan, and basic medical terminology.

“Development of certified nursing assistant (CNA) skills is a critical part of the educational process as they prepare to take the state CNA exam in their junior year,” Kaczmarczyk said. “This year, we provided mobility training, and they will have more patient/nurse interaction. Some duties they assist with in the hospital include providing warm blankets, passing water pitchers, stocking linen and supplies, and discharging patients in wheelchairs.”

As seniors, Wilcox students are introduced to the clinical and administrative medical assistant career areas to prepare for entry-level positions in a medical office or clinic. Students also have the opportunity for work-based learning, where they leave school for work during the trade cycle portion of their schedule. Since seniors have typically received CNA certificates, they can have a more in-depth experience at MidState as part of the program.

“Students experience radiology, cardi diagnostics, respiratory therapy, physical therapy, laboratory, pharmacy, and the cancer center,” Kaczmarczyk said. “Our students choose their top three choices and explore those careers. We have 19 seniors, so several students rotate through each department at a time.”

The rewarding part of the program, she added, is that students at the start of their senior year are usually unsure of the career path they want to take in healthcare, but by the time their rotations are completed in December, they have made a decision.



## Helping Families at Thanksgiving Time

ROCKVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL  
EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEALTH NETWORK

Providing care and support for the community serves the mission of improving the health and well-being of others in the town of Vernon and beyond.

This past year, Rockville General Hospital was pleased to extend that work beyond the hospital walls. In response to receiving handwritten drawings and notes of gratitude from students in one of the local elementary schools in Vernon/Rockville, the hospital collected non-perishable food to help supply full Thanksgiving dinners for the students and their families. We collected such items as vegetables, gravy, cranberry sauce, and stuffing. ECHN employees and physicians also contributed funds to purchase frozen turkeys and apple pies to add to the Thanksgiving meal packages that were provided to families in need this year.



Food provides nourishment for healthy bodies and minds, and there is great value in providing meals for families especially during the holiday season. In addition to the holiday meal boxes, Rockville General Hospital partnered with Eastern Connecticut Pathology Consultants who generously donated a children’s book, Calvin Dreams, by Joy Houlder to every family in the elementary school. Joy is the Vernon Family Resource Center Site Specialist at ECHN’s Family Development Center. Joy wrote and illustrated a book in honor of her younger brother, Calvin. A few days before the holiday, hospital employees packaged and distributed the meal kits and books to families.

Marc Brunetti, Chief Operating Officer said, “As I reflect on gratitude during this special time of year, I am amazed by the spirit, caring and intention of our staff. Their dedication to our community and the outpouring of help and support they provided by coordinating and distributing holiday meals and books to these students and families fills me with joy right where we live and work in our local community.”



## Strengthening the Healthcare Pipeline With Nursing Scholarships

NORWALK HOSPITAL  
NUVANCE HEALTH

It’s no secret that healthcare in Connecticut and across the U.S. is suffering from a workforce shortage. Many describe it as a workforce crisis. To help alleviate the critical shortage of nurses affecting Fairfield County, this year, Norwalk Hospital and the Nuvance Health Foundation partnered with Norwalk Community College (NCC) to offer graduating resident nurses a unique opportunity while pursuing their bachelor’s degree.

Upon employment, Norwalk Hospital provides matching scholarship funds to NCC nursing graduates so they can pursue their Bachelor of

Science in Nursing degree at NCC’s Center for Science, Health, and Wellness. Through this significant and innovative commitment, Norwalk Hospital is demonstrating dedication to excellence and the goal of supporting local nurses who seek to continue their education and graduate debt-free.

These funds are directly supporting nurses who are actively seeking opportunities to become better healthcare professionals and strengthening the healthcare workforce in southern Connecticut with passionate and community-minded individuals.



## Saint Francis Hospital Leads Hospital Violence Intervention Program in Hartford

SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL  
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

In 2004, Saint Francis Hospital partnered with Hartford Communities That Care (HCTC) to form the Hartford Care Response Team, creating one of the first Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIP). Since that time, over 1,900 victims and families of gun violence have been supported in their most trying times.

HVIP partnerships link victims of violence and their families to both hospital and community-based resources, including trauma-informed health services (a more holistic approach to services) and other family-oriented support in order to promote healing and reduce the risk of experiencing violence again in the future.

In May 2022, the city of Hartford announced a partnership between Saint Francis, Connecticut Children’s, and Hartford Hospital, with additional local civic organizations to create a city-wide HVIP program, based on the successes demonstrated with the Saint Francis and HCTC partnership.

“We are proud that Saint Francis was the first in the region to serve our patients and their families with the HVIP and are deeply grateful for our long-standing partnership with Hartford Communities That Care,” said David S. Shapiro, M.D., Chief Medical Officer at Saint Francis. “We are equally excited to see the growth of these types of intervention programs. This initiative, which will work towards standardizing and coordinating how patients are cared for, is crucial in creating more pathways to address the social influencers of health that contribute to violence in the communities we serve.”

The purpose of HVIPs is to provide the care needed beyond physical injuries. This includes crisis counseling, which can start as early as in the hospitals’ emergency departments or inpatient bedsides, followed by connections to social services including mental health support, employment and housing assistance, and youth mentoring.

The city of Hartford committed to building a comprehensive effort across the city with the three hospital systems and local community organizations. In addition to HCTC, the HVIP partnership includes other agencies including Mothers United Against Violence and the Compass Youth Collaborative.

“The coordination of efforts from all three hospitals and community partners will start to seal the gaps in care of patients affected by gun violence, gather and share data, develop best practices that address racial and health equity to ensure these individuals, their families and the community at large can navigate the trauma and loss that violence brings in the best possible way,” said Carolyn Alessi, Regional Director, Community Health and Well Being.

As a part of the initiative, Saint Francis provided STOP THE BLEED® training and kits to the Compass Youth Collaborative Peacebuilder Team. Compass Peacebuilders are often the first on the scene when violence occurs in the city and having training and kits in Peacebuilder vehicles can help make a difference in the crucial first minutes of blood loss.

## Opening Up a World of Possibilities

SAINT MARY’S HOSPITAL  
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

Saint Mary’s Hospital hosted a Summer Student Shadowing program for Waterbury middle and high school students to introduce them to careers in healthcare. The program was a community-driven collaboration involving partners from Brass City Charter School, Crosby High School, Granville Academy, and Grace Baptist Church.

The Summer Shadowing Program gave students a first-hand look at healthcare in a hospital setting. They had the opportunity to be inspired by healthcare professionals that look like them. This exposure showed the students that they can become doctors, nurses, surgeons, and other healthcare professionals.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, only 5% of medical school students are black or African American, and just about the same number

are Hispanic. A report from the National Institutes of Health explains that one method of achieving a diverse healthcare workforce is to establish, promote, and conduct student training programs.

“A major part of our mission is to provide our Early College High School (ECHS) students with the opportunity to extend their learning beyond the classroom by introducing them to professionals who are currently working in the career fields they are interested in pursuing,” said Sean M. Mosley, Esq., Vice Principal/Administrator of ECHS at Crosby High School. “We hope this program inspires more local organizations and businesses to help us make our students’ career dreams come true and to help us expose them to career pathways they may not even be aware of at this stage of their lives.”

The one-week, half-day sessions were held during the last week of July and the first week of August. Each session was programmed to expose students to various healthcare disciplines, both clinical and non-clinical. After a morning briefing, students had an opportunity to shadow an executive leader including the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing Officer, and Chief Administrative Officer. They also shadowed physicians, nurse leaders, and department managers.

Students attended breakout sessions focused on a particular specialty or department. For instance, one breakout session involved the Wound Healing Center, where students learned how hyperbaric medicine works. Students also attended a STOP THE BLEED® training session and learned how a newborn baby is cared for and how to splint a fracture. One session included a panel discussion with physicians and nurses.



“I am very excited about this shadowing opportunity that I believe was an enriching and memorable experience for the youth of Waterbury,” said Derri Hamilton, MSN, RN, Program Director of Behavioral Health at Saint Mary’s Hospital and organizer of the 2022 Summer Shadowing program. “It is truly a blessing to have great leaders, colleagues, and community partners who embraced this idea, knowing that our children are our future.”

## Improving Community Health Through Community Health Workers

ST. VINCENT’S MEDICAL CENTER  
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Using funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, City of Bridgeport and the Connecticut Health Foundation, St. Vincent’s Medical Center (SVMC) developed and launched a pilot community health worker (CHW) program in 2022.

The new program deploys community health workers who use cultural connectedness to the community to

promote, maintain, and improve the health of underserved residents and their families. By providing resources, advice, and support related to healthy behaviors, the program aims to improve health outcomes and the care experience, while reducing costs.

Speaking both English and Spanish enables CHWs Citlaly Ibarra and Paty Lopez to connect and build trust with the native Spanish speakers who comprise more than 40% of Bridgeport’s population. They are also familiar with resources and programs available to the working poor who may not qualify for other government assistance designed to help them reduce expenses.

While conducting informal counseling sessions with clients, the CHWs screen for such social influencers of health as housing, food security, transportation, utilities, personal safety, education, childcare, and financial strain. They then devise a plan to address the client’s individual needs.

In addition to attending community-based events, Ibarra and Lopez serve patients in multiple departments at SVMC, through the Hartford HealthCare Medical Group and at Hope Charitable Pharmacy of Greater Bridgeport. They are also available every Tuesday from June to



November at the SVMC farm stand where they often meet community members’ needs in the moment. This can include providing Bridgeport Bucks coupons for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables, screening for blood pressure and A1C, conducting diaper security screenings, and much more.

The CHWs are a critical link to connecting underserved residents with beneficial resources and helping them navigate the

complex and ever-changing healthcare environment.

“This new program has impacted many individuals and families in a very short time,” explains Bill Hoey, Vice President of Mission Services for Hartford HealthCare in Fairfield County. “It is a perfect complement to the programs that were already in place to serve our community and help address the challenges faced by our underserved neighbors.”

## Connecting Patients to Needed Care via Telemedicine

### SHARON HOSPITAL NUVANCE HEALTH

Nuvance Health is committed to enhancing access to specialty care in the communities that patients call home. It's a long-time and well-known issue that internet and digital access in Connecticut's northwest corner is challenging for many area residents. And, like many rural communities it's also a challenging environment to attract and retain primary and specialty care practitioners.

With a federal earmark from Rep Jahana Hayes and a little ingenuity, Nuvance Health designed and made-live the Telehealth Kiosk on the campus of Sharon Hospital, providing local residents another option to see a Nuvance Health Medical Practice specialist.

Those residents seeking cancer care, a neurological consult, or to talk with an infectious disease specialist can make an appointment to see these specialists at the new, all-private Telemedicine Kiosk at Sharon Hospital. Patients simply



check in at the General Surgery Suite and are brought to a private consult room with large-screen TV. There, a navigator connects them via e-chat with their provider before stepping out of the room allowing for a private consultation.

It is innovative thinking such as this coupled with supportive collaborations that will help bridge the gaps in rural health services.

## Building Partnerships to Promote Access to Services

### STAMFORD HEALTH

Stamford Health knows from its most recent Community Health Needs Assessment that some Stamford residents have challenges accessing primary care providers and specialists. These challenges are most acutely observed among the underinsured and uninsured populations. To help reverse this problem, Stamford Health partners with a local federally qualified health center (FQHC), Optimus, in two significant ways. First, Stamford Health subsidizes Optimus' operation through a \$2 million annual grant. Second, many of Stamford Health's resident physicians see patients at Optimus under the supervision of their preceptors, providing primary care and specialty care services. In academic year 22-23, 54 out of 71 residents regularly see patients at Optimus.

Stamford Health is a major teaching affiliate for Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, with residents who complete medical student rotations in family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology (OB-GYN), and surgery. A critical component of resident education is work in outpatient clinics such as Optimus.

The impact of this partnership is significant. Optimus is Southwestern Connecticut's largest provider of primary health services and Stamford Health staff facilitate approximately 16,000 patient encounters each year. Furthermore, Optimus is the only provider of prenatal services to undocumented individuals in Stamford. Stamford Health OB-GYN residents staff their clinics and see approximately 4,000 patients each year. Stamford is home to many new citizens, and it is estimated that

there are 60,000 undocumented residents in lower Fairfield County.

For patients, there are benefits beyond just access. The clinics staffed by Stamford Health residents provide continuity. That means, a patient has a dedicated primary care provider, just like they would in any medical practice. Patients can establish medical relationships and build trust with their resident physician and healthcare team for a lifetime. Should a patient need hospital-based care, their primary care resident (or at a minimum, the same team) will be a part of their care in the inpatient setting as well. This team-based approach helps increase the overall quality of care they receive and provides patients with a sense of comfort and confidence.

"We know that the ability of people to obtain high-quality care at the right time and in the right setting is important," said Liz Longmore, Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer at Stamford Health. "We work effectively by harnessing partnerships – such as we have forged with Optimus – to help increase access to preventive and specialty healthcare services for many of our communities most vulnerable residents."

"Our residents often cite their time in clinic as the most rewarding part of their residency experience at Stamford Health" said Henry Yoon, MD, Director of Stamford Health's Family Medicine Residency Program, Optimus Preceptor & Board Member. "We all become physicians to help people. Staffing the Optimus clinics provides our residents with the immense privilege of helping to better the lives of Stamford's underserved."

## Major Dental Clinic Serves Over a Thousand Smiles at UConn Health

### UConn JOHN DEMPSEY HOSPITAL

"I haven't been to the dentist in over ten years. I don't have any dental insurance. That's why I'm here."

Patients like Evelyn F. of New Britain are the reason why the Connecticut Foundation for Dental Outreach started the Connecticut Mission of Mercy Free Dental Clinic (CT MOM)—a two-day dental clinic that provides free dental care to the underserved and underinsured in Connecticut.

This year, the 15th CT MOM took place on UConn Health's campus at the UConn School of Dental Medicine. This is the first time that UConn served as the host site in the free clinic's history.

Over 1,000 patients—who otherwise cannot afford the cost of care—left the free clinic with brighter smiles.

"Providing critically important dental care to the citizens of the state of Connecticut is at the core of our school's mission and vision and is a commitment that's shared by the Connecticut Foundation for Dental Outreach," said Dr. Steven Lepowsky, Dean of the School of Dental Medicine. "Good oral health is the key to good overall health, and we are all here to help improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities in need."

The two-day clinic reached full capacity. The weekend was made possible by 800 volunteers, including 160 UConn School of Dental Medicine students, faculty, staff, and residents and 30 School of Medicine students. The volunteers helped set-up, facilitate, and administer free dental care to over 1,000 underinsured and uninsured patients who cannot afford the cost of care. The care included a full range of dental services including exams, x-rays, cleanings, extractions, root canals, and more.

For the patients, the care from the volunteer dentists—especially in the UConn School of Dental Medicine's newly renovated and state of the art Dental Care Center— was top notch.

A patient from Plainville showed up to UConn Health at 2:00 a.m. on Saturday morning expecting long lines based on her previous experiences with CT MOM clinics. For the patient—who needed several procedures over both days, including an extraction, cleaning, x-ray, and filling—the convenience and quality care at no cost is worth it.

"You have to be an early bird sometimes for things you want," the patient said. "This clinic is convenient for me, and I feel you get good care coming here. The volunteers here get you better care than your own private dentist. You get very good care at this event."



## Community Care for the Most Vulnerable

### WATERBURY HEALTH

Those experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and substance use disorder too often fall between the cracks in the healthcare system.

The Greater Waterbury Health Partnership's (GWHP) Community Care Team was created a little over two years ago specifically to improve the health and well-being of this growing, often chronically ill sub-set of patients. Although few in number compared to the overall population, these patients are among the most frequent users of local hospitals' emergency departments (EDs). Since they typically do not have access to primary care services, their illness is often more severe and more difficult to manage by the time they are seen in the ED.

The Community Care Team is made up of more than 40 social service and healthcare

providers in the greater Waterbury area – including staff from Waterbury Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital, StayWell Health Center, and the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services – who meet weekly to provide case management and coordinated care for these highly vulnerable individuals. In its first year in operation, the team cared for 12 patients. Currently, as it begins its third year, there are 50 patients enrolled in the program – with many more in the community needing its services.

The impetus behind the program is the recognition that it's impossible to improve the health of these patients without addressing the many other issues that greatly impact their well-being. "Clearly, if you're suffering from hunger and homelessness, you can't really control anything else in your life, including your health," said Leslie Swiderski, the GWHP's Associate Director of Case Management.

Christine Belanger, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and consultant with GWHP, is part of the Community Care Team. "When patients identified as homeless, with mental health

and substance abuse issues, come into our program, they are intensely case managed," Belanger said. "We pair them with primary care providers. We go with them to their doctor's appointments; we make sure they get there by arranging transportation. We ensure our clients are getting their medications, and if needed, we connect them with services to ensure they are taking their medications correctly. We also help connect clients to services for housing, food, and income, if necessary. By helping them access the social services they need, we can address the social influencers of health that cause them to fall through the cracks."

The GWHP was founded in 2013 by a group of nonprofit community leaders. Waterbury Hospital has continued to be a key participant in the partnership. In addition to helping fund the GWHP, the hospital provides office space at its campus for the program. The collaboration with the GWHP is just one of many outreach programs that the hospital participates in, helping it stay closely connected to the community it serves.

"This program really represents the cutting



edge of community care in the state of Connecticut, and we are proud to be a part of it," said Dr. Lundbye, Waterbury HEALTH's President and CEO. "We have a large number of patients in our community who don't have access to healthcare or are just establishing access for the first time. At Waterbury Hospital, we care for everybody who comes through our doors. That's really what we're all about: We don't leave anybody behind."

## Hartford HealthCare's Healthy Beginnings Program has Made Changes Designed to Increase Access for New Mothers

### WINDHAM HOSPITAL HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Healthy Beginnings, part of Windham Hospital's Women's Health Center, provides information and support directly to new moms, including home visits and connections to resources the women might not even know about. The program is open to any mom receiving care at the Windham Women's Health Center, no matter where they give birth.

The goal of the program is to help establish healthy behaviors and community connections for the birthing parent and other members



of the family, while fostering a feeling of connectedness during the postpartum period, which can be lonely for a new mom. In its first 10 months, the program helped 24 mothers and babies.

"Our number one goal is to empower women, educate them and get them the services they need," said community health nurse Michele Brezniak. "The community connections we help them create last a lifetime. It takes a village like they say, and we're here to be their village."

When launched, the program started once the baby was born. What the team discovered, Brezniak said, was connections needed to be made during pregnancy. Once the baby was born, the new mom and/or parents were too preoccupied and tired.

"Now, contact is made during a prenatal visit at the Women's Health Center," Brezniak said. "Our social worker and I go to one of their appointments and make sure they are connected to services before they have the baby. This way, they have time to get everything done."

In the first two weeks after making this change, the program enrolled five mothers-to-be, and Brezniak had a stack on her desk to process.

"Now, they will have relationships with services before they have the baby," she said. "They will go into parenthood fully supported. After the birth, we follow up to make sure they are still connected and figure out if they need anything more."

## Bringing Preventive Healthcare Into the Community

### YALE NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

Yale New Haven Health's Heart and Vascular Center (HVC) and the American Heart Association recently launched an initiative that provides blood pressure readings and information to New Haven area barbershop patrons.



Clinical staff from Yale New Haven Hospital's HVC Preventive Cardiovascular Health Program visited Dexter's Unisex Barbershop and Willie C's Unisex Barbershop on Dixwell Avenue in New Haven to offer blood pressure readings and information about the risk factors associated with uncontrolled high blood pressure (hypertension). Staff discussed next steps for patrons whose readings indicated they might need intervention, including referral to a healthcare provider.

Erica Spatz, MD, Director of the Preventive Cardiovascular Health Program, noted that hypertension is extremely common among Black men. In Connecticut, hypertension rates in the Black population exceed the national average.

Uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to heart attacks, strokes and kidney disease, yet many men are unaware they have it, or do not want to come in for care, she said.

"We have an enormous opportunity to do better," said Dr. Spatz, associate professor at Yale School of Medicine. "The barbers are amazing – they are community leaders, trusted confidants, and care a great deal about the health and well-being of their patrons. They are such an important link in raising our community's health and we are very proud to work with them."

Dr. Spatz said that hypertension screening is necessary, but not enough. "We need to build easy and trustful care pathways to control blood pressure and improve men's health, and that is what we are doing," she said.

The goal of this partnership was to develop a network of trusted community leaders to address high rates of hypertension through education, connections to care, and self-measured blood pressure monitoring across defined service areas. These community leaders are then able to connect the program to their communities that can benefit from these efforts right in their own backyard. As the program grows, the next step is to expand to faith centers.

# NOTES

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## CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

### PUTTING PATIENTS AND COMMUNITIES FIRST

**RECOVER FROM THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE**

**SUPPORT AND GROW THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE**

**IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITIES**

**ENSURE THE VIABILITY OF THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**



Secure financial support for hospitals to address financial, workforce, and inflationary stresses. Ensure hospitals have the regulatory flexibility to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to meet the current and future health needs of Connecticut residents.



Focus on retaining and growing a skilled, diverse, resilient workforce to meet the patient needs of today and tomorrow.



Partner with others to improve community health, advance health equity, stabilize and strengthen our behavioral health system, promote public health infrastructure, and focus on quality to improve health outcomes.



Expand affordable coverage and access to care, ensure a sustainable payment system, and eliminate inefficient, burdensome payer practices that harm patients and delay care.

### About the Connecticut Hospital Association

The Connecticut Hospital Association has been dedicated to serving Connecticut's hospitals and health systems since 1919. Through state and federal advocacy, CHA represents the interests of Connecticut's hospitals on key healthcare issues in the areas of quality and patient safety, access and coverage, workforce, community health, health equity, and hospital reimbursement.

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