

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. Hospitals are working to partner with their communities to develop opportunities to drive regional transformative change in community health, care delivery, and health equity.

Through community benefit programs that encompass a wide range of services, hospitals and health systems work together with community partners to respond to the critical needs of patients

and communities. Housing, food insecurity, transportation, diaper insecurity, 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 health and poor clinical outcomes. To further these efforts, Connecticut hospitals are interested in building partnerships with their communities and with the state to reimagine how

Medicaid can invest in this work. Hospitals contribute to community well-being in many ways, by providing free and discounted care, subsidizing essential health services, contributing to research, and supporting community health improvement and community building activities. In 2022, the value of these types of community contributions was approximately \$3.4 billion statewide.

The following contains examples of programs that have been created by Connecticut hospitals and their partners through collaboration with the communities they serve.

FY 2022 COMMUNITY BENEFIT BY THE NUMBERS



\$46.1 MILLION
 Community health improvement services and operations

\$267 MILLION
 Health professions education



\$4.5 MILLION
 Subsidized health services to provide care needed by the community



\$15.7 MILLION
 Research and other programs to advance healthcare for patients and the community



\$1.23 BILLION
 Unpaid hospital care provided to Medicaid beneficiaries

\$1.55 BILLION
 Unpaid hospital care provided to Medicare beneficiaries

\$7.3 MILLION
 Community building to create stronger, healthier communities

\$270.1 MILLION

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

\$37.8 MILLION
 Donations to help support community organizations



TOTAL COMMUNITY INVESTMENT: \$3.4 BILLION

These data represent the most recently audited fiscal year, 2022, as reported to CHA by members.

Backus Hospital Partnership Swells Beyond Diaper Donations

BACKUS HOSPITAL
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

A partnership between Backus Hospital and a Norwich nonprofit started with diapers but has grown well beyond babies' bottoms to provide varied support and resources to underserved families.

Since April, Madonna Place has been the distribution center for Backus' Diaper Connections program, delivering more than 11,000 diapers monthly to families around Norwich. Before joining the program, Madonna Place gave families about 30 diapers monthly.

Now, each family receives 100 diapers per child.

"This lifted a huge weight off our moms and families," said Luan Cadahia, Madonna Place's Family Support Center program manager.

Diaper Connections - a partnership between Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA), The Diaper Bank of Connecticut and the Connecticut Department of Housing - addresses diaper need in the 47% of families struggling to buy enough for their children. This insecurity affects their ability to go to work and school and threatens family health with increased depression, stress, and diaper rash in infants and children.

"This is a great example of how hospitals can be an integral part of a community network," said Joseph Zuzel, director of community health at Backus and Windham hospitals, who works with Cadahia to help families.



They began quarterly nutrition lectures at Madonna Place with Shannon Haynes, a Backus registered dietician, showing parents healthy, easy, affordable snacks and meals. A program like this, Cadahia said, "Means children will have parents who have the knowledge and resources to facilitate their healthy growth. We know what our children eat affects their growth, their development, and helps curb obesity."

Zuzel also recruited Cadahia to serve on Backus and Windham's Community Advisory Council, which provides feedback regarding ongoing community health issues and opportunities from a diverse group.

"Joe said he had a vision of equity and dignity for our families," Cadahia said. "He made me very interested to connect to Hartford HealthCare. Our missions align."

Being a small nonprofit serving more than 650 families a year is challenging and partnering with and receiving support from Backus and Hartford HealthCare, "is a dream," said Cadahia. "I've been in nonprofits for many years and I don't think I have ever encountered a hospital coming to an organization and actually asking how can they help better serve the community," she said.

Bridgeport Hospital Encouraging Harding High School Students in Science and Healthcare

BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL
YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

In fiscal year 2023, more than a dozen Bridgeport Hospital employees dedicated their time and shared their expertise and experiences with Bridgeport's Harding High School students.

Activities ranged from providing lectures in their anatomy and physiology classes to a panel discussion about a variety of healthcare careers all during which students were encouraged to consider healthcare as a future vocation.

"As a graduate of Harding High School, I feel a special connection to both Harding and the Bridgeport community," said Katrina Williams, guest panelist and Bridgeport Hospital clinical nurse specialist. "There is so much value in hearing stories from people who look like you, come from the same place, and share the same or similar experiences. I am grateful that I have the opportunity to give back and potentially make a difference for our future leaders."

During the anatomy and physiology classes, Pathologist Harry Sanchez and other Bridgeport Hospital and Yale School of Medicine employees focused on science and research topics that aligned with the class curriculum as well as discussing various pathology careers.

"The Harding High School students are wonderful," said Dr. Sanchez. "They are engaged, enthusiastic, and just a pleasure to speak to. Science Teacher Dr. Tara Cohen has done a great job of



getting the students excited about the health sciences, and the students remind me of why I got into medicine to begin with."

Physical Therapist and Harding High graduate Jenny Louis presented four weekly sessions about the musculoskeletal system. Jenny also participates each year in the annual Harding High School Health Fair.

"I always had a passion for community outreach and healthcare," said Louis. "Being able to combine both my love for physical therapy and community service has been a blessing over the past three years. I cannot wait to see what the future has in store for the relationship that has blossomed between me and this amazing Harding High School program."

This year's end-of-the school year career panel focused on physical therapy, nursing, radiology and pharmacy careers.

Bristol Health Partners with Nutmeg TV to Produce Bristol Health CAREs

BRISTOL HEALTH

Delivering high-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 and homes 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 the 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 new innovative approach to educating the public and breaking down barriers that block access to care through a partnership with local public-access television provider Nutmeg TV. Nutmeg TV, located in neighboring Farmington, is an independent, non-profit, cable access station that provides production studios, equipment, and personnel dedicated to increasing public understanding and enjoyment of what's around them through video.

This partnership opened up an opportunity for Bristol Health President and CEO, Kurt Barwis to host the new show, Bristol Health



CAREs, to inform the public on the services provided through Bristol Health and open up broader conversations about healthcare as a whole. These 30-minute episodes air for one week each on Sunday at 8:00 p.m., Wednesday at noon, and Friday at 4:00 p.m. on Channel 5 and 1070 on Comcast and Channel 6060 on Frontier. These episodes are also released on Nutmeg TV's YouTube channel.

Several Bristol Health administrators, physicians, nurses, and other medical professionals have been featured on the show, shining a light on the many great things Bristol Health is doing to care for the community. Guests on the show have included Bristol Health medical experts from orthopedics, OBGYN, critical care, podiatry, cardiology, hospice, home care, pharmacy, nutrition, endocrinology, professional development, and the Counseling Center. These providers have embraced the opportunity to improve access to reliable healthcare information and further educate the community outside of the four walls of their offices by meeting viewers in their homes. Additional guests have covered topics from healthcare construction and facilities to operations and networking.

This Bristol Health community benefit initiative in fiscal year 2023 provided community members with ready access to Bristol Health's full suite of services across the continuum of care without them even leaving their homes. 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 information to meet their healthcare needs.

The Hospital of Central Connecticut Tackles Safety on the Field

THE HOSPITAL OF CENTRAL CONNECTICUT
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

The Hospital of Central Connecticut, in partnership with Hunter's Ambulance, donated a life-saving Automated External Defibrillator (AED) to a Berlin Youth Football team.



"We know that every minute that goes by where we don't have access to a life-saving device like an AED, the chance of a patient's survival decreased by 10%," said Charles W. Johndro, MD, medical director of Hartford HealthCare EMS.

This invaluable equipment will travel with the football team and serve as a critical resource to ensure the safety of young athletes and attendees during practices and games.

The portable AED delivers electric shock to restart a heart in sudden cardiac arrest, a condition that can strike anyone, regardless of age or fitness level. Sudden cardiac arrest is often caused by a fast or irregular heartbeat due to disrupted heart activity. When a heartbeat is too fast or too irregular, the heart won't pump effectively, eventually stopping.

When it comes to cardiac arrest, time is of the essence.

"When the heart stops, it stops sending blood and oxygen to the rest of the body. If it isn't restarted within minutes, brain damage starts to set in and death could quickly follow," Dr. Johndro said.

AEDs received national attention in the past year when one was used to save the life of Buffalo Bills player Damar Hamlin, who collapsed on the field in Cincinnati following a tackle in January 2023.

As for the Berlin team, it's a medical device they hope to never use but coaches are happy to have on hand.

"Our safety is of the utmost importance for us, being a contact sport," said John Paul Demko, Berlin youth football coach. "Safety is top of mind for our players, coaches and fans. We hope to keep this device in the box forever, but it's important to have on our field."

CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Air Cleaners Inside Schools and Other Community Settings

As the only freestanding children's hospital in Connecticut, Connecticut Children's proudly continues to extend its impact in strengthening families so they are best positioned to promote their children's health, development, and well-being.

Connecticut Children's commitment to addressing community needs led to the creation of the Asthma Center in 1998.



The Asthma Center is a leader in pediatric asthma research and a resource for evidence-based asthma programs. The center is dedicated to improving the health and well-being of children and families through community-based collaborative research and programs, and working to encourage, facilitate, and deliver a mechanism for program dissemination and outcomes assessment of clinical and translational research conducted by investigators within community settings, including schools, homes, community organizations, hospitals, and ambulatory practice settings. The Asthma Center is committed to the training of investigators and community stakeholders in community-based research.

In conducting Connecticut Children's Community Health Needs Assessment, families highlighted that environmental events, like flooding, neighborhood safety, parks, trees, heat, noise, and air quality) were mentioned as barriers to health.

Connecticut Children's recently worked to address indoor air quality through a partnership between the Asthma Center (Jessica P. Hollenbach, PhD) and University of Connecticut, supporting the innovative work led by Dr. Marina Creed, Director, Clean Air Equity Response (CLEAR) Program at UConn Health and Dr. Kristina Wagstrom, UConn School of Engineering. The partnership was a successful community endeavor to build Do-it-Yourself (DIY) Air Cleaners, also called a Corsi-Rosenthal (CR) box. The filtration systems are named for their creators, Dr. Richard Corsi, dean of engineering at the University of California-Davis, and Jim Rosenthal, CEO of Texas-based company Tex-Air Filters. Anybody can put together these efficient, low-cost, DIY air filters. Indoor air purifiers

are a reliable method to supplement insufficient ventilation. The problem across the 935 CT schools is that many either have inadequate or completely lack heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). The CR Box provides a low-cost filtration solution. Therefore, a multi-disciplinary team was built to test and implement CR Boxes across Connecticut schools.

The goal was to test the efficacy of CR boxes in occupied classrooms, where rapid decreases were found in fine and coarse particle number concentrations after the fan was turned on. Laboratory tests also estimate the CR Box provides a clean air delivery rate (CADR) similar to HEPA filters. Furthermore, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Research and Development's 3,000 cubic ft. bioaerosol chamber testing results show that the CR box removes 97% of infectious aerosols in just 30 minutes, and 99.4% within 60 minutes. Taken together, the CLEAR teams' results demonstrate that CR boxes are an effective stop-gap solution to improving indoor air quality.

To date, the CLEAR team has deployed over 400 CR boxes in community spaces across Connecticut. More than 300 CR boxes have been built at Box-A-Thon events hosted by the UConn Schools of Medicine and Nursing. In June, the CLEAR team donated 150 CR boxes to vulnerable members of the community to protect them from the dangers of wildfire smoke particles in the air. Also, as a public service, UConn has donated materials and STEM lesson plans for 100 air filters to the Connecticut Education Association for schools and teachers in need of immediately improved indoor air quality this cold and flu season.

The Asthma Center, with its closely established ties to the community, disseminated CR boxes to various partners like South Park Inn, a homeless shelter in Hartford. Through a partnership with Healthy Homes, the CR boxes were also able to help families in the North End of Hartford who were affected by floods.

These Corsi-Rosenthal boxes help to address air quality concerns expressed by the community. They are simple, affordable, and help address the community's immediate need for cleaner indoor air. *Please note that Connecticut Children's is not endorsing the Corsi-Rosenthal boxes for home use at this time. They are recommended for school use, with supervision by teachers and other staff with support and discretion of the school system.*

Community Fall Risk Reduction Team

DANBURY HOSPITAL/NEW MILFORD CAMPUS
NUVANCE HEALTH

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists falls as the leading cause of unintentional injury deaths among adults aged 65 and over in the United States, and Nuvance Health's most recent Community Health Needs Assessment for Danbury and New Milford hospitals highlighted the issue of falls among elderly individuals. Hospital leaders recognized this as having an impact on the health and wellness of those in the community; of note, a population of patients falling at home, calling EMS for assistance with getting up from the floor, and declining further medical care that would be received through transport to an Emergency Department. These patients were often going unnoticed by their medical providers, who were unaware of the falls, and therefore no enhanced services were initiated to diagnose the problems and support remaining safe at home. Frequently, the next contact with any member of the healthcare team was through another call to EMS.

A process was implemented for patients declining Emergency Department transport to have an ambulatory care manager contact them and/or speak with their primary care physician's office if consent is obtained. The medical care team is then able to conduct further assessments, review potential factors contributing to the falls, and explore modification of treatment plans to optimize the health and safety of the patients. While this approach yielded positive outcomes, it was clear the focus needed to expand to involve more community agencies and health



professionals. In response, the Community Fall Risk Reduction Team was initiated.

In addition to the actions of the ambulatory care manager as described, patients with four or more falls within a 12-month period are brought to the Community Fall Risk Reduction Team for review and discussion to determine if community services can be leveraged to benefit the patient/family. The team is facilitated by three health system care management staff. Agencies from across the community participate on the team. By developing an interdepartmental approach, those who provide care and services to this population come together to develop strategies that mitigate patients' fall risk and improve their overall well-being.

This community collaboration allowed Danbury and New Milford hospitals to serve approximately 350 patients in fiscal year 2023, with a total of 1,269 patients served since its inception in 2019. To continue best practices and optimize patient safety, individualized intervention and engagement of key community stakeholders remains fundamental.

Day Kimball Health Partners with Lions Club on Low Vision Therapy Program

DAY KIMBALL HEALTHCARE

Thanks to a partnership with the Lions Club, Day Kimball Health's (DKH) Occupational Therapy Department has been improving the lives of patients grappling with low vision. Low vision is an uncorrectable vision loss that cannot be improved with glasses, contacts, or surgery.

Low vision includes varying degrees of sight loss and affects people with a visual acuity measurement of 20/70 or worse and could be caused by a variety of disorders including macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy. Reduced reading vision is the most common deterioration, but other aspects of sight loss can deteriorate including peripheral and color vision, contrast or glare, and the ability to adjust to changes in levels of light.

Since February 2023, DKH's partnership with the Lions Club has been enhancing the lives of patients whose low vision has interfered with daily activities such as driving, personal grooming, reading, watching TV, distinguishing medications, and preparing meals. The Lions Club provides occupational therapists with access to adaptive equipment that is then provided to patients free of charge.

Following a referral from the patient's eye care professional, the occupational therapists at DKH assess patients to determine the degree of their vision loss. A plan is created with specific goals and strategies that will help them to perform everyday tasks often with the use of the adaptive equipment donated by the Lions. Patients learn to use their remaining vision effectively and live more safely and independently.

Adaptive equipment provided to patients include:

- Magnifying glasses of various strengths to help people read medicine bottles and books
- Check guides to help people see where to write on a check
- Large print paper
- Keyboards with high contrast to help people see the keys as they are trying to type

Additionally, patients can receive cooking equipment to help avoid burns, 3D stickers for ovens and coffee pots to assist with turning on the appliances, talking watches and alarm clocks to help people hear the time, and a number of different lights that offer a full spectrum to help with contrast and improved sight during functional tasks.

By helping patients make modifications that will improve their everyday lives and maintain their independence, DKH strives to help them be safer in their homes as they return to performing daily tasks. For some, being able to cook light meals can mean the ability to stay at home. For others, the joy of still being able to read a book or do their favorite crafts can mean the world to them.

This partnership is one more way that DKH supports its community by delivering specialty healthcare services to improve the lives of residents in Northeast Connecticut.



Greenwich Hospital Welcomes Project Search Interns

GREENWICH HOSPITAL YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

For the past five years, Greenwich Hospital has partnered with Abilis, Inc. in Greenwich to provide participants with special needs the opportunity to develop valuable on-the-job experience through the Project Search work-skills program. Abilis is a nonprofit agency that assists individuals with developmental delays.

Over the years, a total of 23 Project Search interns with developmental delays have trained and worked at Greenwich Hospital. Interns are paired with hospital mentors and immersed in three, 10-week rotations to develop work skills for future employment. Along the way, the interns explore a variety of career paths while increasing their independence, self-confidence, and self-esteem in preparation for future employment.

More than 50 hospital employees have served as mentors from dozens of departments, including Environmental Services, Facilities, Food and Nutrition Services, Gift Shop, Infusion, Laboratory, Materials Management, Maternity, Medicine, Neurology, Outpatient Center, Pathology, Pharmacy, Physical Medicine, Radiology, Sterile Processing, Surgery, Transport, Thrift Shop, Volunteer Services, and Wound Care. The interns work at the main hospital and at off-site locations, including the Helmsley Ambulatory Surgical Center and West Putnam Medical Center in Greenwich as well as Long Ridge Medical Center in Stamford.

In addition, Greenwich Hospital provides a designated space for the Abilis training classroom, supplies, and uniforms for the interns. The interns also take part in hospital orientation sessions focusing on hand hygiene, infection control, fire safety, customer service, communication skills, and assimilation with new hospital staff. The hospital covers the cost of flu vaccinations and tuberculous tests which are a prerequisite to working at the hospital.



Greenwich Hospital's participation in Project Search benefits the community in multiple ways. People with disabilities face unemployment rates at more than double that of the general population. By contrast, Project Search offers interns total immersion in the workplace and valuable on-the-job experience to help them develop marketable skills. During the course of many months, interns support and bond with each other making new friendships and social connections.

The program also gives people with special needs the opportunity to be integrated into the greater community, which benefits everyone, including Greenwich Hospital employees. The diverse hospital mentors involved in Project Search say that they learned as much as the interns and truly enjoyed this coaching and educational experience. Parents of the interns report that their children are more self-assured and empowered after their Project Search experience with Greenwich Hospital. As one Abilis executive stated, "Greenwich Hospital has made a difference in the lives of past and future Project Search graduates and has set an example of diversity and inclusion for the community."

Caption: Greenwich Hospital staff celebrated with 2023 Project Search graduates (from left) Beverly Campos, Jennifer Pascucci, Omar Pakeel, Tony Dagner, Harry Perlman (intern), James Wagner (intern), Jennifer Freeley, Caitlin Daingerfield (intern), Peter Pough, Lori Bufano and Kathy Massi.

Griffin's Hands-on Interdisciplinary Health Initiative

GRIFFIN HEALTH

Through an innovative population health initiative, Griffin Health has been actively impacting the health and well-being of individuals in the Lower Naugatuck Valley area. Griffin has strategically employed social workers, counselors, community outreach nurses, and established community partnerships to address the root causes of social influencers on health that often lead to chronic diseases and recurring hospitalizations.

The strategic implementation of population health initiatives allows Griffin to broaden its impact in the community. This interdisciplinary approach ensures that individuals not only receive referrals to

essential services, but also benefit from the support and expertise of professionals who understand the complex interplay of social factors affecting health.

Through volunteer efforts, Griffin actively coordinates food drops, blood pressure screenings, and health educational series at senior centers, housing authorities, and other socially vulnerable communities. This direct and hands-on approach uncovers multiple individuals in need of additional assistance.

Recognizing the importance of long-term follow-up to address illness and disease, Griffin's certified counselors and community health workers attend these events to assist attendees in enrolling in beneficial social support programs. Griffin Health's proactive involvement ensures that community members have access to vital resources. Often during follow-up outreach, it is revealed that individuals face challenges with resources and communication, hindering their ability to access community resources.

To aid the process, Griffin utilizes Unite Us, a digital platform, as a supportive mechanism to quickly screen and refer patients to community organizations like TEAM Inc., a Derby-based anti-poverty agency. Leveraging technology as a tool, Griffin ensures diligent tracking and timely resource follow-ups to make sure that individuals who were

referred to community benefit services can receive the valuable responses. Through this meticulous tracking and timely resource follow-up process, Griffin ensures a meaningful impact on the lives of thousands through direct community engagement.

Griffin Health has cultivated strong partnerships with community benefit organizations, such as TEAM Inc. This collaborative approach involves holding case conferences with patients, discussing challenges with TEAM Inc., and organizing in-person meetings to work alongside TEAM Inc. case managers on utility assistance, childcare support, diaper assistance, meal assistance, housing aid, and employment training. These collaborative efforts help to address immediate health-related social needs and actively build a resilient and connected community to make a lasting impact on the well-being of individuals and families in the Lower Naugatuck Valley.



Hydroponic Garden Provides Fresh Produce for Patients

HARTFORD HOSPITAL
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Seven floors above the hustle and bustle of doctor’s offices and patient rooms, a rooftop garden on Hartford Hospital’s Conklin Building offers a green oasis.

One sunny day, Sonia Rivera, nurse manager at the hospital’s Community Health Clinic, reached among the stems of a plant to pluck a few ripe cherry tomatoes. They added to the day’s harvest of lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, and string beans plucked from the innovative hydroponic garden that sprang to life this summer.

About 18 months after the Food4Health clinic opened at Hartford Hospital to help address local food insecurity, the program expanded to grow produce to give away. By mid-summer, more than 270,000 pounds of fresh food was provided at no cost to patients with the greatest need, including more than 800 pounds of fresh vegetables from the garden.

Built by Hartford-based Levo International, the system consists of rows of planters fed water and nutrients through food-safe PVC pipes.

“This is a natural evolution of the Food4Health program,” said David Fichandler, senior director, operational coordination, integration and excellence at the hospital. “This helps us feed more than 500 families facing nutritional insecurity.”

Clients referred by hospital clinics and qualifying colleagues visit Food4Health for nutritious food, often meeting specific dietary needs. Pantry staples and fresh vegetables line shelves and clients can take home recipes for the items they choose. Many are on fixed incomes and struggle with the rising cost of groceries.



“We provide healthy foods, which help prevent chronic illness like heart disease and diabetes from progressing,” Rivera said.

David Juros, who coordinates Food4Health, says there have been more than 5,000 patient visits since the clinic opened. There are now two locations - at the hospital and nearby Institute of Living, both part of Hartford HealthCare.

While the soil-less approach means no weeds, Juros says plant root systems need to be trimmed periodically. There are few insects and no ground-level critters to munch on the vegetables, so less is lost. In addition, plants grow faster with the nutrient and water system, allowing for multiple harvests.

Hartford Hospital expects to add a second rooftop garden to increase production to over two tons annually and plans are underway for campus farmer’s markets where patients and colleagues can access fresh, healthy produce.

with the official launch of hospital-based EMS as a satellite of Trinity Health Of New England Mobile Healthcare. One ambulance is now available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on the Johnson campus and plans call for adding a second ambulance to serve the needs of the local community.

The Trinity Health Mobile Healthcare ambulance allows Johnson to fulfill unmet need for interfacility and critical care transfers at the hospital without relying on the availability of ambulance services based in nearby towns. As a result, patients who are critically ill or need a higher level of care may be transferred more quickly. The ambulance is

Johnson Memorial Hospital Launches Emergency Medical Service

JOHNSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

Johnson Memorial Hospital has a reputation for delivering safe, patient-centered care. The hospital also demonstrates its commitment to the community through strategic growth aimed at helping to build stronger, healthier communities, and ensure access to care specific to the evolving needs of the population it serves.

Johnson has long been the sponsor hospital for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the region. In July, this commitment was expanded

Opiate Task Force Earns Quality of Life Award

CHARLOTTE HUNGERFORD
HOSPITAL
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Life-saving work by the Litchfield County Opiate Task Force to prevent overdoses and respond to anyone asking for help with addiction earned the 2023 Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce Quality of Life Award.

The Task Force – representing 60 agencies including Hartford HealthCare, nonprofits, health departments, state and local governments, treatment facilities, schools, law enforcement, and religious organizations – adheres to the strategy of “harm reduction” to help people use more safely, manage their use and abstain, all while meeting people who use drugs where they are.

“Quality of life, in our work, starts with just keeping someone alive through very real, community-based ‘life or death’ interventions provided by Task Force members over the last 10 years,” said Tom Narducci, administrative director of behavioral health at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital (CHH), and Task Force co-chair with Maria Skinner, a CHH board member. “Our members have saved

also used to transfer patients being discharged from Johnson to another facility or their home.

At the same time, the resources assist, when available, surrounding communities where Advanced Life Support (ALS) services may be limited by the number of available paramedics at any given time and the vast geographic area these providers serve.

The need for this service was apparent almost immediately. Within the first 60 days of operation, Johnson’s EMS responded to 528 requests for service – this number includes 439 patient transfers from Johnson and 89



countless lives over the past decade and help many to begin a journey of recovery.”

Task Force efforts are organized around the group’s four goals:

- Improving access to care
- Enhancing collaboration and data sharing among service providers
- Reducing substance use and misuse in the community
- Sharing information and resources about addiction, prevention, safety, and treatment with other Task Force members and the community

CHH has two full-time substance use case managers in the emergency department helping people with substance use problems with the initial steps toward recovery.

Task Force members have “rovers” – mobile tool boxes – to connect people in the community with resources like naloxone, which can help save a life during an opioid overdose, and special strips to test opioids for the deadly substance fentanyl.

In addition, the Task Force monitors overdose statistics in real time, activating members when they notice spikes. Teams are dispatched using an app to coordinate response, allow them to get resources like naloxone into the community, and connect people to care.

The Task Force – part of the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program, a multi-year, federally-funded initiative addressing barriers to treatment for substance use and opioid use disorders – has formed partnerships with local businesses, which now have naloxone onsite and trained employees to administer it when necessary.

Members also meet weekly with law enforcement and first-responders to enhance referrals to treatment and mental health services.

responses to 911 calls from members of the community.

“The opening of this branch of Trinity Health Of New England Mobile Healthcare at Johnson is the latest example of our commitment to our patients, their families, the Stafford Springs community, and the surrounding area,” said Lindsey Gamble, MSN, RN, Executive Director of Operations and Patient Care Services, Johnson Memorial Hospital. “We are certain this added convenience will support our efforts to create an exceptional patient experience in every encounter.”



L+M Hospital Promotes Healthy Living Through Healthy Eating

LAWRENCE + MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

Lawrence + Memorial Hospital (L+M) identified connecting food-insecure diabetic patients and prediabetic people with healthy food and education as a way to help improve their health. In addition to providing diabetes self-management education, home visits and connections to community resources, L+M's Community Health Worker Wanda Santiago, a bilingual diabetes educator, also provides healthy cooking classes for her clients in New London and Groton.

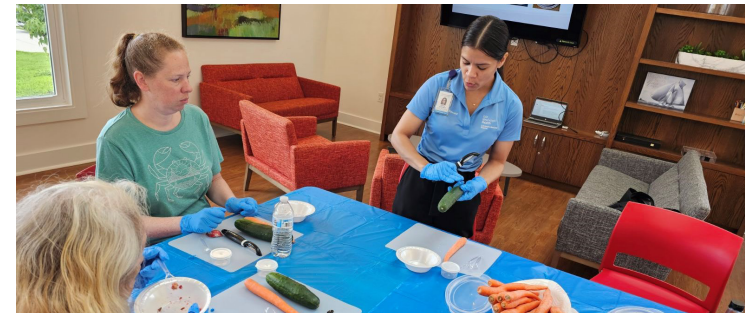
"My initial focus was on promoting healthy living, healthy food, and healthy communities," Santiago, a former nurse from Puerto Rico,

said. "I quickly realized that some patients were struggling to eat healthy because of lack of knowledge about healthy foods and how to prepare them."

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S. and the main cause of kidney failure, lower-limb amputations and adult blindness. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 11% of the U.S. population has diabetes and more than 23% are undiagnosed.

To help her clients understand the importance of selecting healthy, plant-based foods, Santiago obtained supplies from F.R.E.S.H. New London, a food justice organization in New London that is also supported by the hospital. The non-profit organization grows food in community gardens throughout the city and operates a mutual-aid style food pantry.

Armed with her supplies, Santiago shared recipes with her clients that they could easily – and inexpensively – recreate at home. So far, Santiago has conducted presentations at three different



community organizations, offering two or three sessions at each location. The classes run between 90 minutes to two hours and up to 15 clients attend each program.

Going forward, program participants will also receive a bag containing the groceries to recreate the meals Santiago demonstrates in their own home thanks to the generosity of a donor.

"We are what we eat is something that I always say in my presentations, so I asked them at beginning of each presentation: who wants to share what you ate today," said Santiago. Using this technique her clients became more aware of the processed food and unhealthy sweets that were part of their diets.

"Simply talking about healthy recipes was not enough. But engaging in the process together was a powerful motivator for individuals to adopt healthy habits at home," Santiago stated. "Additionally, participants can share their own experiences with each other and their families."

"As a healthcare professional, I make it a point to never suggest any specific diet to my patients," Santiago states. "It's crucial to stress that following popular diets on social media without consulting with a doctor or other qualified healthcare provider can be risky. I always emphasize the importance of keeping up with regular medical appointments and screenings to ensure overall wellness."

The Center for Healthy Living

MANCHESTER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEALTH NETWORK

Manchester Memorial Hospital engages in exceptional mission-focused community building efforts. ECHN's Center for Healthy Living, previously known as the Diabetes Wellness Center, has been working to improve health outcomes for individuals across distinct stages and walks of life.

A Bridge to Health and Wellness

Recognizing the vital role of bridging the gap between secondary care and primary care for health and wellness, the Center for Healthy Living has implemented a comprehensive approach to health. The Center provides many health education and wellness community programs, nutritional services, employee health services, and corporate consultancy services. This integrated care is designed for everyone, irrespective of whether they suffer from a chronic disease. The Center has supported hundreds of people over the past year specifically in prevention of Type 2 Diabetes.

A Commitment to Daily Health

At the ECHN's Center for Healthy Living at Manchester Memorial Hospital, the goal is not just about treating ailments—it is about preventing them. This commitment shines through in the daily health and wellness programs and resources they offer for both their employees and the larger community. They believe that getting healthy and staying that way is intrinsic to one's well-being, and they are dedicated to helping everyone on this journey.

Empowering with Knowledge

With the understanding that knowledge is power, especially when it comes to one's health, the ECHN Nutrition Services have been pivotal in guiding people towards healthier living. Their team of Registered Dietitians provides expert guidance and counseling to help individuals cultivate smarter, healthier, and sustainable eating habits.



Resources for All

Whether an employee at ECHN's Manchester Memorial Hospital or a member of the local community, the Center for Healthy Living has something for every individual. They have rolled out numerous resources directly to departments, ensuring that people have easy access to tools that can improve their health and overall wellness.

Engaging the Broader Community

Manchester Memorial's community engagement does not stop at its doors. They have actively collaborated with corporate teams, direct primary care practices, independent living facilities, gyms, and various community groups, such as MARC, Inc. of Manchester. Through fun events and programs, they aim to improve health and bring about a lasting change in the community's mindset towards health and wellness.

In conclusion, Manchester Memorial Hospital, through its Center for Healthy Living and its various other initiatives, is an exemplar of the kind of community-focused healthcare that builds a healthier, happier community for everyone.

Program helps address underrepresentation in health care professions

MIDDLESEX HEALTH

Black, Indigenous and Latine individuals are extremely underrepresented in healthcare professions in the United States, which contributes to health disparities for people of color. The data is stark, but Middlesex Health is helping to bridge that gap through its Medical Explorers Program.

In 2019, 5.8% of physicians in the United States were Black and 8.5% were Hispanic compared to 59.5% who were white. At that time, 12.2% of the population was Black, 18.5% was Hispanic and 60.1% was white, which further underscores lack of physician representation.

Findings from a 2021 study further highlight the problem. Only 22.2% of Black adults reported being of the same race as their healthcare providers compared to 73.8% of white adults. That same study reported that 23.1% of Hispanic/Latino adults reported racial, ethnic, and language concordance with their usual health care provider.

It is well documented that the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the healthcare workforce has a negative effect on patients of color. Fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce is critical to improving trust



between patients and providers, increasing access to care and improving healthcare quality and outcomes for people of color.

To address the lack of racial and ethnic representation in healthcare, Middlesex Health offers a Medical Explorers Program. Developed as a health equity program, the program's objective is to create a healthcare educational pipeline by introducing Black, Indigenous and Latine students to a variety of healthcare professions through an engaged interactive learning experience.

The Medical Explorers Program features one cohort each year, and the program runs from January through May. The monthly sessions are virtual to allow for maximum student participation and geographic reach. Virtual sessions reduce travel time and the need for transportation.

To be eligible for the program, students must be in grades 7-12, or be a recent high school graduate, and identify as Black, Indigenous, or Latine.

Participants in the Medical Explorers Program are guided through a simulated patient case as it moves through the hospital system. Middlesex Health staff who identify as people of color are the featured speakers as a variety of professions are modeled. Through this activity, students learn about each highlighted profession, how the speakers got involved in their profession, and about their clinical expertise regarding the simulated case.

On-site experiences include a tour of Middlesex Hospital in Middletown, which allows participants to meet staff and experience various clinical departments. There's also a celebration where certificates of completion are awarded.

Local Partnership Promoting Health in the Community

MIDSTATE MEDICAL CENTER
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Helping to improve the health and wellness of communities sometimes means bringing the experts out of the medical centers and directly to the people, which is one of the tenets of a partnership between MidState Medical Center and Masonicare.

To date, the Hartford HealthCare facility has hosted two panel discussions at Masonicare, a senior health and retirement community in Wallingford. The sessions are free and open to Masonicare residents and members of the community.

The June 2023 presentation included a panel of experts from the Hartford HealthCare Ayer Neuroscience Institute discussing “Your Brain Health: Sleep, Memory and Movement Disorders.” The panel discussed brain health, memory care, signs of dementia, the importance of sleep, and other topics.

“We understand how critically important it is to provide people in our communities with education and information that, ultimately, allows them to live healthy, productive lives,” said Gary Havican, MidState president.

Close to 200 people attended the discussion as experts addressed symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments for a wide variety of neuro-related topics. For example, information presented as part of the section on memory care showed audience members how to determine if something as simple as forgetfulness is a sign of dementia or just normal aging.

The audience also asked questions, engaged with experts in real time and left with brochures and information about services and programs that might directly impact their own health.

“This event puts audience members up front and in person with leading experts in their fields,” said Jon-Paul Venoit, Masonicare president and CEO.

The first panel discussion between MidState and Masonicare was in the fall of 2022, focused on cancer. The next is planned for spring 2024 with experts from the Hartford HealthCare Heart & Vascular Institute.



Senior Community Care Team

NORWALK HOSPITAL
NUVANCE HEALTH

By the year 2040, people aged 65 years and older are expected to make up 22% of the population; a 5% increase from 2020. With an aging population, the need for services supporting senior health is growing. Most older adults in the United States have at least one chronic health condition, making access to affordable, quality healthcare a priority. Social Determinants of Health (SDoH), or the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes, significantly impact the vulnerable senior population. Addressing these variables, which include things such as economic security, social-connectedness, food security and nutrition, healthcare, and healthy environments, requires a community approach.

Norwalk Hospital, part of Nuvance Health, implemented the Senior Community Care Team (SCCT) with this in mind, after observing a pattern of high utilization of healthcare services among seniors in the hospital. It was noted the patients’ healthcare outcomes were often affected by non-medical issues. The SCCT leverages

the power of community partnerships to link high-risk patients to primary care, behavioral health, addiction services, and social services. A seasoned Licensed Clinical Social Worker from Norwalk Hospital facilitates the team. The SCCT has worked to address medical and non-medical health-inhibiting factors, such as housing, food insecurity, transportation, taxes, conservatorships, elder care, protective services, and more.

The seniors discussed in the SCCT weekly forum are referred by community agencies, hospitals, primary care providers, or ambulatory care managers. A strategy is developed to address identified issues, and a plan for each client continues to be discussed weekly until resolution. Plans have included modifications to enhance health at home, referrals to skilled nursing facilities, engagement with protective services for the elderly, referrals to senior service agencies, adult day care involvement, home care involvement, mobile crisis interventions, support from the Agency on Aging, and more. Approximately 160 patients were served in FY23. The key ingredient for sustainability is the commitment by the total community to enhance the lives for the seniors served.

Spring Kits for Kids

ROCKVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL
EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEALTH NETWORK

The continued efforts of Rockville General Hospital’s employees and its community-building activities benefited hundreds of children across the region. In a notable initiative known as the “Spring Kits for Kids,” Rockville General showed what’s possible when care extends beyond hospital walls.

Holidays, all throughout the year, are cherished moments for families. They offer opportunities for bonding, creating lasting memories, and nurturing the kind of deep connections that enhance overall well-being. Recognizing the role these festivities play, especially for the mental health of children, Rockville General identified a significant gap in community services. Local food pantries, overwhelmed with their mission to provide essential nourishment, often did not have the resources to offer something extra for the Spring holidays—activities that could bring joy and engagement for the children they serve.

To bridge this gap, the Spring Kits for Kids drive was initiated. It wasn’t just a call to action but a heartfelt appeal to Rockville General Hospital employees to come forward and contribute in any way they could. The objective was simple yet profound: provide activity kits for kids during the Spring holidays to ensure they had both food for their bodies and nourishment for their souls. The notion of healthy activities includes making something and the pride that comes from such moments.

The response was overwhelming. Not only did hospital employees rally to the cause, but the larger community joined hands to make it an even greater success. The collaboration between Rockville General Hospital caregivers and the AFT Nurse’s Union was particularly



noteworthy. Together, they managed to amass over 1,300 craft kits and egg coloring kits. These weren’t just kits; they were bundles of joy, creativity, and a testament to the power of community spirit.

Thanks to the collective efforts of all those involved, two of the primary local food pantries, MACC Charities Food Pantry and Hockanum Valley Food Pantry, were equipped with more than just essentials. They had enough Spring Kits to ensure every family they served could provide their children with a sprinkle of holiday magic.

Rockville General Hospital’s Spring Kits for Kids drive exemplifies the broader mission to not just treat ailments, but to actively be an example of hope, support, and community building. Initiatives like these are a reminder of the indomitable human spirit and the boundless good that can be achieved when everyone comes together.

Saint Francis Hospital Partners with COMPASS Youth Collaborative

SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

For over 47 years, the Joan C. Dauber Food Pantry at Saint Francis Hospital has provided food assistance, nutritional counseling, and case management to families and individuals in Hartford and Tolland Counties. Created in 1976, it was the first food pantry located in a hospital setting in the U.S., and continues its service today through grants, donations, and local merchants. Most recently, the Food Pantry has partnered with COMPASS Youth Collaborative to form a Transitional Employment Program (TEP) as part of the Hospital Violence Intervention Program (HVIP).



The Transitional Employment Program grew out of the long-standing HVIP program, which supports wrap-around care for patients who are victims of violence to ensure social care needs are met when discharged from Saint Francis. Research shows youth who have been impacted by violence are at high risk for experiencing violence again and are often not ready for traditional job placement programs, but are in need of a safe space to practice skills. The program allows a range of learning opportunities and provides a safe place for participants to hone employment skills. Along with the valuable work experience, participants have the opportunity to continue their education and earn career certifications.

“At the Food Pantry, we give teens and young adults a chance to work around their mistakes, to grow and be better in their community as well as in their place of employment,” said Taurean Minnefield, TEP Coordinator for COMPASS Youth Collaborative. “We deal with high-risk youth. The more they’re involved with something positive, the more they’re off the streets.”

The Transitional Employment Program provides youth with the professional skills they need to gain and maintain meaningful employment. Program participants are provided the opportunity to build job skills that are transferable into various workforce sectors, as they develop hard and soft skills to be productive members of a team and their communities. Youth participants work alongside COMPASS program managers as well as Food Pantry staff and volunteers to give back to their community by serving those who are most in need. Some of their duties include stocking shelves, taking inventory, unloading trucks, and using pallet jacks.

“Because we have the partnership with Saint Francis, we know when someone has been a victim of violence, and we can meet them with the purpose of not only having the physical healing, but the mentorship and behavior change over time,” said Jacquelyn Santiago Nazario, Chief Executive Officer of COMPASS Youth Collaborative.

“We can do so much more for our community if we think about the resources and opportunities we have available within our healthcare system,” said Carolyn Alessi, Regional Director of Community Health and Well Being at Saint Francis. “That’s where I feel like connecting those dots and creating those opportunities really demonstrates to our community that we’re committed. We’re committed to them for the long haul.”

Saint Mary’s Hospital – Transforming Communities Initiative and Collaborative Efforts with Community Partners

SAINT MARY’S HOSPITAL
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

Serving the Waterbury community for over 114 years, Saint Mary’s Hospital’s focus has always been and continues to be living its Mission to be a transforming healing presence in the community. Since its founding, Saint Mary’s seeks opportunities to partner with local community-based organizations and community members to bring about positive change as it relates to improving the health, access to care and the well-being of its residents.

Saint Mary’s recently applied for and was awarded grant funding up to \$300,000 per year for three years

from its parent organization, Trinity Health, and its Transforming Communities Initiative (TCI) program. Engaging with the community partner, Waterbury Bridge to Success, Saint Mary’s worked to identify the health priority that would be the focus of the TCI grant award. In early 2023, Waterbury Bridge to Success, as the TCI Lead Community-Based organization, convened community members both virtually and in person, and had nearly 300 participants in attendance at the session. The Hispanic Coalition and RIBA Aspira also joined in the effort. By reviewing the Community Health Needs Assessment data, the groups identified the top priority as seen by Waterbury residents. The community determined that mental health is of the utmost importance and would serve as the TCI priority in Waterbury.

The 2023 Health Equity Report published by Data Haven revealed that, “18% of Waterbury adults report experiencing anxiety regularly and 15% report being bothered by depression.” Community conversations about the causes of mental health struggles conducted by Waterbury Bridge to Success identified employment, poverty, and racism as upstream factors for those living in Waterbury.

Over the course of the next three years, Saint Mary’s TCI effort will focus on these upstream factors in collaboration with community-based organizations and community members to bring about change. The



TCI collaborative effort will use a racial equity lens to examine policies that impact access to employment, to implement strategies that help residents build wealth, and to learn more about what can be done to improve the neighborhood environment that will result in positive change for the mental health of residents.

Saint Mary’s, along with Trinity Health Of New England’s Saint Francis Hospital in Hartford and Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, Mass., are three of the ten recipients across the national health system’s 90 plus hospitals, or Ministries, to receive Trinity Health’s TCI grants. The grants are

based on two criteria; at least 40% of the population in the community is Black or Hispanic, and the median earning for the community is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Trinity Health launched their TCI program to advance community partnerships that focus on improving health and well-being in the local communities served by their Ministries. This innovative funding model and technical assistance initiative supports communities using policy, system, and environmental change strategies to advance racial equity, address social needs to improve well-being and health equity, strengthen community partnerships, and accelerate community health improvement.

St. Vincent’s Medical Mission Impacts Hundreds of Lives

ST. VINCENT’S MEDICAL CENTER
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

“We literally save lives.”

That’s how Bill Hoey, vice president of mission services, describes Medical Mission at St. Vincent’s Medical Center every November.

“It’s not hyperbole,” he said. “Every year, at least one person and usually more is transported to the emergency room. What a gift that is for the community.”

St. Vincent’s introduced Medical Mission in 2015, continuing it after becoming part of Hartford HealthCare in 2019. Although the pandemic canceled

the event in 2020, St. Vincent’s teams pivoted with a smaller version in the summer of 2021 and a full-scale one that November. On November 4, 2023, Medical Mission extended to all Hartford HealthCare regions statewide.

Medical Mission delivers healthcare, social and support services to neighbors in need in their own community. At the events, volunteer providers and colleagues offer medical exams, podiatry services and more at no charge and requiring no insurance. The one-day mission also provides necessities from eyeglasses to haircuts.

The effort served more than 300 in 2022 (down from pre-pandemic high of around 500), including pediatric patients. This year, Hoey expected 400 to 500 in Bridgeport, a return to pre-pandemic levels.

The logistics are staggering – everything from advance communications in appropriate locations and languages, to making sure there’s adequate Wi-Fi that day, to creating a Kid Zone offering childcare while parents receive care.

“It really is a godsend,” he said. “To bring such needed medical care right into our communities, to eliminate barriers to care, is phenomenal.”

A side benefit is colleague team-building, Hoey said. Colleagues from

clinical care to environmental services – more than 200 in 2022 – work side by side at Missions.

Medical Mission 2022 by the numbers:

- 34 haircuts
- 160 foot washings
- 19 podiatrist visits
- 100 nutritional counseling sessions
- 99 prescriptions filled
- 106 flu vaccines (77 adult/29 pediatric)
- 33 COVID-19 bivalent boosters
- 6 TDaP vaccines
- 4 pneumonia vaccines
- 50 behavioral health screenings
- Distributed 40 blood pressure cuffs, 83 pairs of glasses, more than 250 pairs of socks, 332 coats (244 adult/88 children), 259 pairs of shoes (170 adult/89 children), and more than 500 hats, scarves, gloves and mittens
- More than 500 boxed meals



Summer Internship Program

SHARON HOSPITAL NUVANCE HEALTH

Addressing Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) is a primary approach to achieving health equity, and Sharon Hospital, part of Nuvance Health, put a large focus on one of the five key components this past year: Education. This is such a crucial area largely because of how it influences the other SDoH.

Education has a high correlation with greater life expectancy and smarter health behaviors. Additionally, it is pivotal in reducing socioeconomic inequalities. Continuing education after high school has been linked to improved health and well-being, as well as reduced risk for premature death. One large element that governs students' decisions to attend college is the preparation they receive during their primary and secondary education. Furthermore, the quality of this preparation is the driving influence of a student's likelihood of graduating from college.

To help mitigate the issue of education access and quality, as outlined in Sharon

Hospital's most recent Community Health Needs Assessment, Sharon Hospital implemented the Summer Internship Program. In partnership with Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, this program works to provide learning opportunities for 11th- and 12th-grade high school students who have an interest in the healthcare field, both clinical and non-clinical. Students selected for this one-week paid summer immersion program got exposure to various health departments and gained an understanding of the industry, roles, responsibilities of various professionals, and how healthcare is delivered within the hospital. Additionally, the students developed soft skills through experiential learning and shadowing.

Enabling high school students to gain this practical experience prior to college can notably impact one's career trajectory and employment potential. Concluding the summer 2023 internship program, one student was given the opportunity for an on-the-spot interview as a Dietary Aid and later offered the position by the hiring



manager. Using the valuable hands-on field experience and knowledge she gained from the hospital's working professionals, she will work at Sharon Hospital while studying radiology to continue her education.

Incorporating Behavioral Health Support into Primary Care

STAMFORD HEALTH

Stamford Health knows from its last two Community Health Needs Assessments that behavioral health is the most pressing health concern for Stamford residents. Their community is not isolated from the mental health disorders and substance abuse that are sweeping our nation.

To help combat this problem, Stamford Health forged a unique partnership with Liberation Programs, one of Fairfield County's leading behavioral health organizations specializing in treatment for all types of substance use disorders. In 2022, Liberation Programs and Stamford Health Medical Group (SHMG) piloted a program to provide mental health services to patients in an integrated way – working to incorporate behavioral health support into primary care. Liberation Programs counselors became embedded in SHMG locations, starting in Stamford at 292 Long Ridge Rd. In 2023, the partnership expanded into a Greenwich SHMG office at 75 Holly Hill Rd.

This co-location of primary care and behavioral health services gives SHMG providers access to mental health treatment for their patients, and facilitates a warm handoff, critically important as access to mental health professionals is known to be a significant barrier to care. The impact of the partnership is significant. Since its inception, over 800 patients have been referred to Liberation Programs services including over 550 individuals in Stamford and nearly 300 in Greenwich. In 2023, the program grew an astonishing 61%, having facilitated 4,610 patient appointments/sessions.

"I am so grateful to be practicing at a health system that shares my belief that mental health is equally important to physical health," said



Raviv Berlin, MD, Chair of Psychiatry at Stamford Health. "There are many contributing factors to this mental health epidemic, including a lack of accessible, affordable mental health services. I am proud that by working with partners like Liberation Programs we can amplify our impact and do our part to make mental health care more accessible for the communities we serve."

"We are proud at Liberation Programs to partner with Stamford Health around the growing need for resources to help our community manage the mental health crisis," said John Hamilton, President and CEO at Liberation Programs. "Our mission is to provide prevention, treatment and recovery services to help individuals and their families impacted by substance use and mental health conditions to foster hope and maintain wellness. We have successfully worked together with Stamford Health to integrate behavioral health services into two large medical clinics, and the initiative has been an overwhelming success."

Historic Year for UConn Health's Project SEARCH Program

UConn JOHN DEMPSEY HOSPITAL

UConn John Dempsey Hospital continues to be a leader in preparing adults with disabilities for the workforce.

Since 2015, UConn Health has had more than 40 graduates from its Project SEARCH internship program, which prepares young adults with developmental or intellectual disabilities for independent employment.

This year, of the seven who started in the program, only three made it to the graduation ceremony. That's because all seven found jobs before the program ended, and four of them had to work that day.

"This was the first year we successfully placed all of the interns before the end of the program year," said Sandra Finnimore, UConn Health's Project SEARCH manager.

Founded in 1996 at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital, Project SEARCH is designed for students either in their last year of high school or graduates in their first year out of school. Favarh, which is based in Canton and is a chapter of the Arc, a worldwide organization that supports people with disabilities, runs it locally. UConn Health was Connecticut's first Project SEARCH host site.

The typical Project SEARCH experience at UConn Health includes internships in three different areas, each for about 10 weeks. Food and nutrition, materials management, linens, and housekeeping are among the areas that historically have the most interns.

"It's been a learning experience for me," said Brett Hammond, whose first assignment was the mail room. "They're teaching us job skills, like how to keep a job, and budgeting."

Hammond went on to work at Price Chopper in Newington. Classmate

Jazmine Barber went in knowing she wanted to become a certified nursing assistant someday.

"I have to build some medical field experiences, whether it's doing housekeeping at a nursing home, checking in patients and checking out patients in dermatology, or doing receptionist work at a doctor's office," Barber said of her assignment at the front desk of UConn Health's psoriasis center.

She graduated early for a job as a companion with Home Instead in West Hartford, assisting clients in their homes and running their errands.

"I think it is such a benefit to have Project SEARCH interns working within UConn Health because it not only conveys and promotes an inclusive work environment, but it also encourages empathy, which



is such a vital trait when working with patients and customers," said Marisol Cruz, UConn Health's human resources liaison for Project SEARCH.

The program runs from August through May. The interns report daily at 8:00 a.m. for a morning meeting that focuses on skills needed to become and stay employable. Then they go to their assigned areas to work for next five hours. They reconvene around 2:00 p.m. for a wrap-up session.

"They're gaining real-life experience, hands-on learning, transferable skills, as

well as exposure to a well-known name like UConn Health on their resume," Finnimore said. "They're getting the trainings that the employees here would go through. It's an opportunity they wouldn't typically have. And the skills that they learn here are transferable to any type of job."

24/7 BABY Hands-On Emergency Training

WATERBURY HEALTH

A program that was piloted in greater Waterbury in 2023 aims to help improve outcomes for babies born outside of a hospital setting by ensuring first responders have guidance when they need it most.

Dr. Brooke Redmond, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Yale School of Medicine, Chair of Pediatrics at Waterbury Hospital, and medical director of the Waterbury Hospital neonatal intensive care unit offers hands-on training to first responders (firefighters, police and others), emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and paramedics in the Waterbury, Connecticut, area to help prepare them for such scenarios. She created the 24/7 BABY program which allows her and other

neonatologists to provide support in real time during emergencies.

According to Dr. Redmond, the differences between the hospital and field environments are substantial. If a baby delivers at the hospital, the amount of preparation by those involved is very extensive, and the hospital has a big team in place to help during a birth.

“But out in the field, there’s much less warning and many fewer people available to assist. There are so many things to do in a limited amount of time, and it feels like a less controlled setting with so many different things to potentially hone in on, so identifying in the moment what could make the most difference for the baby can be challenging,” Redmond said.

During trainings with the EMS community, there’s an education session as well as simulation and hands-on skills training. Because emergency births in the field are not common, first responders don’t have a lot of

exposure to babies in the field. Whereas, for neonatologist, it’s a lot easier to retain these skills and nuanced details because they use them all the time.

This program puts expertise surrounding something that’s common for neonatologists in the hands of people for whom it’s rare day-to-day. Through 24/7 BABY, help during these low frequency high stakes events integrates with the communication capabilities already in use by the EMS community, making sure neonatologists provide them with what they need in a way that adheres to their state protocols. During extramural deliveries or newborn resuscitations, an EMS team can even video call a neonatologist, who will then guide them through the process of providing first aid to a newborn.

The program launched in April 2023 and Dr. Redmond has expanded availability statewide, with in-person education-simulation sessions and trainings currently focused on EMS Regions 1 and 5.



Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program (HVIP)

YALE NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

The United States faces an urgent crisis of violent victimization. Because community violence is a public health problem, it demands health care approaches to victim services. Hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) have emerged as an important public health response to the problem of community violence.



Recognizing that hospitals are essential resources for violence reduction, hospitals have worked to combine the efforts of medical staff and community-based service providers to intervene with victims of violence in hospital settings. The Yale New Haven Hospital Violence Intervention Program fosters collaboration between hospital providers and community resources to advance trauma-informed case management services for victims of violence. Supported by the national Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI), this collaborative program seeks to provide victims of violence with comprehensive services within the hospital system and community-based programming. The program works with victims who are physically assaulted, including victims of gun violence, and those who have been sexually assaulted or involved in human trafficking.

The program provides direct services to the victims above and beyond what a hospital can normally offer given the social emergency of these circumstances, including:

- Victim compensation through Federal VOCA funding
- Assistance in mental health services care and referral
- Return for clinical care and rehabilitation
- Housing, education and employment assistance

Violence intervention works best where there is trust between victims and their service providers. This program establishes strong relationships with its clients. The YNHH HVIP team has been working with a male client who was the victim of assault in his own home. With the support of HVIP, the client was able to advocate for himself to obtain a full protective order, assistance with navigating the legal system, resources for domestic violence/intimate partner violence and financial assistance. The client has maintained contact with Victims Services Navigator for support as needed and always shares his gratitude for the program’s support.

Windham Hospital Feeds the Community through Willimantic Food Pantry

WINDHAM HOSPITAL HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Back in June, Windham Hospital donated \$5,708 to the Covenant Soup Kitchen in Willimantic, monies pledged by regional leaders to encourage colleagues to complete an engagement survey.

The one-time donation set in motion a project coordinated by Michael J. Davis, Windham’s senior director for operations, that resulted in a windfall for the soup kitchen’s sister program, the Community Food Pantry Cooperative (CFPC).

The extended partnership was triggered by comments made by Debbie Scott, who works in the hospital’s Food and Nutrition Department, to Davis about almost bare shelves at the food pantry. She sent him photos illustrating the dire situation.



“When we presented the check to the pantry, the gratitude from pantry leadership and those who depend on the pantry, was palpable,” Davis said. “They were all so thankful for all of us here at Windham Hospital. And, at that time, we talked about what else we could do, how we could develop more connections.”

CFPC, open for shopping six days a week, stocks a variety of non-perishable food items and also offers baby food, formula, baked goods, fresh produce, meat, dairy products, eggs, and other perishable foods when available.

At the end of the summer, Windham colleagues were called upon

to donate non-perishable food items and cash donations. In all, several hundred pounds of food were collected.

“Since 1933, this hospital has been the hub of the Willimantic community,” Davis said. “You’ve either been born here, you’ve been treated here or you work here. Many of our colleagues live here. We have an organically tight relationship with the community. And, as part of Hartford HealthCare, we are reaching out more than ever to make community connections happen, so this is natural.”

Joseph Zuzel, director of community health for Windham and Backus hospitals, adds that Windham’s Community Health Needs Assessment survey showed that food insecurity, especially among children, is on the rise across eastern Connecticut.

“We see the supplies in these pantries wax and wane,” Zuzel said. “It’s important we do what we can to support them. Smaller food banks in particular can struggle, and so we make sure we can help with distribution to everyone.”

CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

PUTTING PATIENTS AND COMMUNITIES FIRST

ENSURE THE VIABILITY
OF THE HEALTHCARE
SYSTEM

SUPPORT AND GROW
THE HEALTHCARE
WORKFORCE

PROVIDE HOSPITALS
WITH THE TOOLS TO
PREPARE FOR THE
FUTURE

IMPROVE THE HEALTH
OF OUR COMMUNITIES



Pursue initiatives that support patient access, ensure the viability and evolution of the healthcare system, and slow total healthcare spending. Expand affordable coverage and access to care, ensure a sustainable payment system, including fair Medicaid payment, and eliminate inefficient, burdensome payer practices that harm patients and delay care.



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



Secure financial support for hospitals to address financial, workforce, and inflationary stresses. Ensure hospitals have the regulatory flexibility to meet the current and future health needs of Connecticut residents, with a focus on the Certificate of Need program and making telehealth flexibilities permanent.



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.

NOTES

**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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