

A publication of  
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*Hartford Area*

Wheeler Clinic is a non-profit behavioral health agency serving Central Connecticut and Greater Hartford. The clinic provides mental health, substance abuse treatment, early childhood, prevention/wellness and special education services to children, adolescents, families, adults and the elderly.

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## Care Coordination Services Expand to Hartford



The new Care Coordination team in Hartford (first row, l to r): Maria Carmen Morales, Arnaldo Perez, Jr. and Christina Cruz. Back row (l to r): program coordinator Víctor Gonzalez, Clancee Victor, Teresa Williams, Casey Sawyers, Miguel Falcon and Samuel Saylor.

Wheeler Clinic's Department of Children's Outpatient and Community-based Services has launched a new Care Coordination program in Hartford. The program is a welcome addition to the New Britain Care Coordination and the Hartford/New Britain Enhanced Clinical Care Coordination programs that began in 2002 and 2004 respectively.

"We are very excited to be working with families from the Hartford and West Hartford communities," said Sarah Becker, LCSW, associate director of community based services. "Often families must negotiate complex, confusing systems to find the services and supports they need. We are committed to helping them create an effective care plan for their child, and help these families overcome the barriers and challenges they face in order to thrive."

Care Coordination works with families of children and adolescents with behavioral and emotional challenges using a strengths-based team process that helps families improve relationships and functioning. Care Coordinators assist and empower youth and families to access needed services and supports such as recreational activities, leadership and vocational opportunities, outpatient mental health services, advocacy services, and other services and supports.

The Hartford Care Coordination team is located at 103 Woodland Street with Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services for Children, the Family Support Center, Intensive In-home Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Services and Multisystemic Therapy. They can be reached at (860) 241-0317.

## A Message from the President



Susan Walkama, LCSW

Why is our safety net so important?

When times are tough we all have a tendency to place the welfare of our own families first. It's a natural response but it is vital that we do not lose sight of the fact that the health of our families is integrally linked to all of those around us. The wellbeing of Connecticut's most vulnerable families is linked to my family... and to yours.

- 1 in 5 families in America are affected by mental illness
- 1 in 150 children born today will be diagnosed with autism
- Only 2 million of the 5 million adults with severe alcohol or drug addiction will receive treatment this year
- 500,000+ children live in foster care
- 1,271 Americans out of every 100,000 are incarcerated – nearly 87% are minorities.

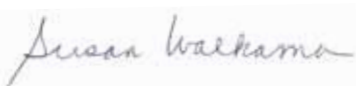
Chances are that these statistics affect our own lives or the lives of our loved ones. Connecticut residents have long understood that a safety net benefiting vulnerable children and adults ensures a brighter future for everyone. Wheeler Clinic has been an important part of that safety net for more than forty years, helping hundreds of thousands of families across the state. Yet demand for our services far exceeds our capacity each and every year.

This year, as our legislative leaders struggle to balance the state's troubled budget, unemployment rises and families face ever-increasing financial pressures, it is more important than ever that we keep our safety net intact. We must commit both public and private resources to meet the basic needs of children and families including behavioral health and special education needs.

Please join us in advocating for Connecticut's safety net:

1. Tell three people how important the safety net is to your community
2. Let your elected leaders know what you think
3. Give what you can to organizations within the safety net that you feel do a good job in your community

It matters to every family.



## Open House Showcases Extended Day, EMPS Programs

Three programs serving children, adolescents and families in the greater Middlesex County and Meriden-Wallingford areas were introduced to area providers at a special open house event at 20 Tuttle Place in Middletown. Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services, Extended Day Treatment and The Academy of Wheeler Clinic provide a continuum of care for children with mental health and special education needs that is strengths-based and solutions focused.

Kimberly Nelson, LCSW, vice-president of children's outpatient and community-based services for Wheeler Clinic addressed the open house attendees, "Wheeler Clinic is very excited to provide special education, mobile crisis and extended day services to families in the lower river valley area. Our valuable collaborations with the Child Guidance Clinic for Central Connecticut, the Department of Children and Families and local school districts have greatly facilitated the implementation of these comprehensive, community-based services."

- Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services for Children and Adolescents (EMPS) is a community mobile response serving Meriden and Wallingford in partnership with the Child Guidance Clinic for Central Connecticut. The clinic has provided integrated EMPS services to Hartford and greater New Britain since 2002.
- The Extended Day Treatment Program offers intensive after-school behavioral health treatment for adolescents ages 12-17. Evidenced-based practices include individual and family therapy, parent support groups, therapeutic recreation and more.
- The Academy of Wheeler Clinic, which opened in 2004, is a satellite program of Wheeler Clinic's Northwest Village School in Plainville. serving up to 20 middle and high school students from towns in the Connecticut River Valley.



Enjoying the Wheeler Clinic Open House event at Tuttle Place are (l to r): Laureen Sheehan, Mental Health Program Director, Department of Children and Families, Middletown Area Office; Kim Nelson, LCSW, Vice-President of Children's Outpatient and Community-based Services at Wheeler Clinic; and Willard McRae, Chair of the Greater Middlesex Community Collaborative.

## Reconnecting Families Helps Smooth Reunification Process

For parents ready to reunify with their children who were placed in foster care or a group home, the Reconnecting Families Program is a welcome support during what can be a stressful time.

"We work in a collaborative environment with each family in their home, developing an individual treatment plan," said Tameka Kelley, MSW, program coordinator. "Parenting is a very complex job, so we aim to educate parents on the skills they need to raise a child successfully. These include structure and limit setting, discipline, responding to needs, problem solving, safety, establishing daily routines and much more."

The program works closely to help children and families experience a smooth and successful transition after out-of-home placement. Staff provide case management, parenting education and therapeutic visitations three months pre- and post-reunification with families referred by the New Britain Area Office of the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Another important component is the cooperative working relationship established between the parent and foster parent. "When the two families work together, it results in a natural support system for the parent and an easier transition for the child," said Tameka.

Since this is a new model, Tameka meets regularly with DCF staff to assess the program and find areas of improvement or modification.

For more information, contact Reconnecting Families at (860) 826-4930.



The Reconnecting Families Team (l to r): program coordinator Tameka Kelley, MSW, Dafne Sepulveda, Carolyn Luce and Stephanie Wainwright.

## Conference Teaches Evidence-Based Tobacco Treatment Applications



Andrea H. Weinberger, Ph.D., assistant professor at the Yale University School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, discusses tobacco cessation treatment in people with psychiatric disorders at a recent conference organized by Wheeler Clinic.

Wheeler Clinic, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, hosted a free half-day conference entitled "Putting Evidence-Based Tobacco Treatments into Action: The New 2008 Clinical Practice Guidelines in Smoking and Tobacco Use" March 18 in Hartford and June 2 in New Haven. The workshops were valuable opportunities for health-care practitioners and

behavioral health clinicians to learn how they can apply the guideline's evidence-based interventions and effectively improve their patients' chances of quitting smoking successfully.

After the keynote address by Judith L. Cooney, Ph.D., Director of Substance Abuse Day Program and Tobacco Control at VA Connecticut Healthcare System, participants attended breakout sessions conducted by researchers from the Yale School of Medicine and the VA Healthcare System.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008* as a resource for clinicians, treatment specialists and others in delivering effective interventions for tobacco use and cessation.

Laura Minor, MS, PA, CPP-R, of Wheeler Clinic's prevention, wellness and recovery department said, "We had a capacity crowd, and due to overwhelming interest, a second conference was scheduled in June, co-sponsored by the Office of Community Health at the Yale School of Public Health along with New Haven's CARE (Community Alliance for Research and Engagement)."

The Connecticut Clearinghouse is an excellent resource for information on many behavioral health and prevention issues. Log onto to [www.ctclearinghouse.org](http://www.ctclearinghouse.org) to learn more.

These conferences are part of the ongoing Connecticut Institute for Tobacco Education and Training initiative begun in 2005. For information on Connecticut state initiatives, legislation and other statistics, visit the Connecticut Department of Public Health's website at <http://www.dph.state.ct.us>. *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008* can be found at [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/).



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Bertha Wheeler's bequest helped establish Wheeler Clinic in 1968 and continues to provide a legacy of care for the children, adolescents and adults who need the clinic's help. By remembering Wheeler Clinic in your estate plans you help foster positive change today ... and tomorrow.

Year after year, your legacy gift will support the day-to-day operations of Wheeler Clinic, help launch new initiatives or support current programs.

- Bequests are the easiest and most common way to make a gift
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To find out what type of gift makes the most sense for you and your family please speak with your financial and/or legal advisor.

For more information please contact the Wheeler Clinic Development Office at 860-793-4214.