

Positive Change

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A publication of
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Wheeler provides comprehensive solutions that address complex health issues, providing individuals, families and communities with accessible, innovative care that encourages health, recovery and growth at all stages of life. Our integrated approach to primary and behavioral health, education and recovery creates measurable results, positive outcomes and hopeful tomorrows for more than 30,000 individuals across Connecticut each year.



Wheeler Opens New Community Health Center Location in Waterbury

Saint Mary's Hospital, a Regional Health Ministry of Trinity Health of New England, has received approval from the State Office of Health Strategy to transition its outpatient behavioral health clinic to Wheeler Clinic, which is establishing a new Family Health & Wellness Center in Waterbury. The transition is expected to be complete by September 2019.

The Wheeler Family Health & Wellness Center at 100 Jefferson Square in Waterbury will be Wheeler's fourth, with other locations in Bristol, Hartford, and New Britain. As a federally qualified health center, Wheeler is part of a network of community health centers nationwide that serve the health care needs of more than 28 million Americans. In January, Wheeler received approval from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for its application for health center expansion into Waterbury, which allows Wheeler to deliver integrated primary care and behavioral health center services at the site.

"Wheeler has a proven track record of providing Behavioral/Mental Health treatment throughout the state. We are very excited to welcome them into the community in collaboration with Saint Mary's Hospital," said Saint Mary's Hospital President, Steven Schneider, M.D., M.B.A.

"Wheeler is uniquely positioned to address the unmet need for integrated primary care and behavioral health services in Waterbury, particularly among adults with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance use disorders," said Susan Walkama, LCSW, Wheeler's president and chief executive officer. "This population is often reluctant to seek primary care, experiences disparities in access to health care, and generally has poorer health outcomes."

Wheeler has provided a wide array of services in the Brass City since 1986, and currently operates two offices and numerous programs in the city, including foster care, in-home family therapy, and alcohol and substance abuse education programming.

Wheeler will provide all behavioral health services currently available at the Saint Mary's Behavioral Health Clinic, including intensive outpatient (IOP), behavioral health outpatient services (individual, family, and group therapies), and psychiatric services, including psychiatric evaluations and medication management. There are no planned reductions or interruptions in any of the services provided.

As a community health center, Wheeler also will offer an expanded array of services for existing and new patient services for individuals and families in Greater Waterbury and surrounding towns.



a message of change

from the president

WheelerClinic.org



This issue of *Positive Change* celebrates another significant milestone in Wheeler's evolution—the opening of a community health center in Waterbury, in partnership with Saint Mary's Hospital and Trinity Health of New England. This new development reflects our ongoing commitment

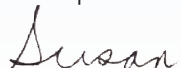
to provide high-quality, person-centered integrated health care to our most vulnerable residents and promote the overall health of our communities.

We're also celebrating the launch of HealthySteps, a national, evidence-based interdisciplinary pediatric care program—and first for Connecticut—that promotes positive parenting and healthy development for babies and toddlers. The program is part of Wheeler's federally funded Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health program, operated in partnership with

St. Francis Hospital to serve young children and youth affected by substance abuse and trauma through our community health center in Hartford.

As we feature these important "firsts," we are growing other newer programs, including our pediatric dental services and medication-assisted treatment programs, which further expand our continuum of care. Another longstanding tradition, our 34th Annual Golf Classic, supports and strengthens our services for individuals and families across Connecticut.

Thank you for your ongoing support. We gratefully acknowledge your generosity and your role in our continued growth to meet community needs. You make it possible for us to deliver innovative, whole-person care to people at every stage of life.


Susan Walkama, LCSW
President and Chief Executive Officer

Waterbury *(Continued from Page 1)*

Waterbury community health center services will include:

- Primary care;
- Medication-assisted treatment for alcohol or opiate addiction;
- Linkages to specialty and ancillary services like dental care;
- Care management for adults with complex health care needs and behavioral health concerns;
- Laboratory services;
- Prevention, health promotion, and wellness services; and
- Chronic disease management for asthma, diabetes, hypertension/heart health, HIV, and Hepatitis C treatment and services.

Wheeler's integrated primary and behavioral health care service model, embedded in trauma-informed and culturally- and gender-responsive approaches, reduces barriers to care and provides a more effective path to primary and preventative care for individuals with serious mental illnesses and substance use disorders.

Dr. Rebecca Eleck-Bruce Celebrated in "40 Under Forty" Class of 2019



Dr. Rebecca Eleck-Bruce, primary care medical director, Wheeler, is among the *Hartford Business Journal's* "40 Under Forty" class this year.

Dr. Eleck-Bruce oversees the delivery of primary care services for thousands of medically underserved children and adults through Wheeler's Family Health & Wellness Centers in Bristol, New Britain, Hartford, and Waterbury, where patients are treated along the full spectrum of chronic and acute illness and disease, from heart disease and diabetes, to asthma and much more.

"Dr. Eleck-Bruce is an outstanding leader in her field and has been an important part of Wheeler's transformation into a federally qualified community health center and primary care provider," said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer, Wheeler. "Community health centers provide care for more than 28 million Americans, so Dr. Eleck-Bruce's ability to lead the field in new directions through Wheeler's innovation helps to create change throughout the community health center network in America."

Promoting Positive Parenting

Wheeler is First in Connecticut to Implement HealthySteps



Leaders from HealthySteps and members of Wheeler's integrated health care team.

A secure parent-child bond is critical to a child's development because it fosters a sense of security, self-esteem, and resilience and is an essential building block for forming strong relationships in life.

As part of a comprehensive effort to meet the mental health and primary care needs of its youngest patients, Wheeler is the first in Connecticut to implement **HealthySteps**, a program of **ZERO TO THREE**, designed to strengthen parent-child bonds through screening, referral, and treatment.

HealthySteps is a national evidence-based, interdisciplinary pediatric primary care program that promotes positive parenting and healthy development for babies and toddlers, with an emphasis on serving families living in low-income communities.

The program serves children birth through five years old who receive pediatric services at Wheeler's Family Health & Wellness Center at 43 Woodland Street in Hartford. Wheeler's integrated care team, comprising a pediatrician, senior integrated health care psychologist, medical and dental assistants, care and practice managers, early childhood professionals, social workers, and others, were trained in this model in June.

"We are thrilled that Wheeler is the first to implement this program in Connecticut and look forward to meeting the needs of children and families in Greater Hartford," said Rahil D. Briggs, Psy.D., national director of HealthySteps. "There is no time more important for young children's brain development than the first few years of life, when they also happen to visit their pediatrician and pediatric care team often—12 to 13 times in the first few years of life. We will work closely with the Family Health & Wellness Center team to leverage the value of those frequent visits and further encourage secure parent-child bonds."



PEDIATRIC CARE • SUPPORTING • PARENTING
A Program of ZERO TO THREE

"The pediatric setting is the one place where every baby will show up to be seen by members of a comprehensive care system," said Matthew Melmed, J.D., executive director of ZERO TO THREE. "This program positions and equips all members of the integrated care team to support the unique needs of the parent and the child."

Wheeler's HealthySteps program is part of the organization's Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Program, which works with families receiving services through Wheeler's Hartford-based Family Health & Wellness Center whose infants and children, age birth to 12, have experienced trauma, and/or are at risk for, show early signs of, or have been diagnosed with developmental delays, a mental illness, or Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). The IECMH program, in partnership with St. Francis Hospital, provides services for infants born with NAS. The IECMH program is funded by a five-year, \$2.5-million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and offers a continuum of early childhood services based on the needs of the child and their caregivers through multiple service components, including workforce development, outreach, screening, and direct services.

For information about Wheeler's HealthySteps program, call Flora Murphy, LCSW, program manager, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Program, at 860.520.6215, or FMurphy@Wheelerclinic.org.

ZERO TO THREE's Nine Elements That Power Positive Parenting

- *Imagine your child's point of view, especially during tough moments.*
- *Notice and celebrate your child's strengths, abilities, and capacity to learn and develop.*
- *Delight in moments of connection with your child.*
- *Respond with interest and sensitivity to your child's cues.*
- *Provide consistent, age-based guidelines, limits, and boundaries.*
- *Recognize and regulate your own feelings and behaviors before responding to your child.*
- *Know that parenting can be stressful and missteps are part of raising a child.*
- *Work toward balancing your needs and your child's needs.*
- *Seek help, support, or additional information on parenting when you need it.*

Source: ZERO TO THREE, <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2198-nine-elements-that-power-positive-parenting>

Meeting Community Needs

Immediate Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for Opioid and Alcohol Addiction



Connecticut ranks among the top 10 states for rates of opioid-related overdose deaths. To meet the critical need for education and treatment, Wheeler offers immediate access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT), for opioid misuse, for example, prescription painkillers, fentanyl, and heroin, as well as alcohol use, at

convenient locations in central Connecticut.

“Opioid and alcohol addiction are significant challenges that extend across all geographic and demographic lines,” said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer of Wheeler. “It’s critical for individuals and families to know that there are effective, immediate treatment options available and that recovery is possible.”

Wheeler offers extended-release injectable Naltrexone (Vivitrol®) and Buprenorphine (Suboxone®, Zubsolv® or Bunavail®), which provide effective treatment for addiction. These approaches allow patients to stay abstinent longer, experience fewer cravings, and decrease chance of relapse. NARCAN® also is available to patients, friends and family. When combined with individual and/or group therapies, MAT is an effective, evidence-based treatment for addiction.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, from 1999 to 2017, more than 702,000 people have died from a drug overdose. In 2017, more than 70,000 people died from drug overdoses, and of those deaths, almost 68 percent involved a prescription or illicit opioid.

Initial clinician evaluations are available at Wheeler community health center locations without an appointment.

(Continued on Page 5.)

Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation, Inc. Extends Support for Dental Care in Hartford: *More than 760 patients received services in first year*



Wheeler received its second year of funding for \$50,000 from Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation, Inc. to address the oral health needs of children and families in Greater Hartford. This grant helps Wheeler’s dental team to deliver a full array of on-site family dental services through its community

health center at 43 Woodland Street, Hartford and engage patients in oral health education and active participation in dental care.

In 2018, Wheeler received funding from Delta Dental to help establish a community oral health program in Hartford serving low-income, medically underserved individuals, with an emphasis on children. Launched in January 2018 and providing a full range of dental services such as cleanings, screenings, sealants, X-rays, prevention, and more, Wheeler’s dental program served 764 patients, providing 4,173 distinct services in 2,241 visits, in the first full program year, including 267 children (and 1,217 distinct services). More than 85 percent of children served by the dental program, and 76 percent of all patients, also were engaged in the health center’s behavioral health and/or pediatric or primary care services, demonstrating Wheeler’s efforts to ensure health center patients receive integrated care to meet all their health needs and improve overall wellness.

“Wheeler is providing vital services to the Greater Hartford community, expanding access to dental care for children through their new community oral health program,” said Gene F. Napoliello, DDS, chairman, Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation. “There is a link between good oral health and good overall health, and Wheeler’s focus on integrated care will allow countless children and families the opportunity to lead more healthful lives. We were proud to support the inaugural year of this program, and we look forward to another successful year of healthier smiles.”

Foundation funds also support the purchase of oral health care education packages, and dental supplies, including age-appropriate toothbrushes, toothpaste, and coloring books promoting preventative dental care for children. Wheeler’s dental assistant and community engagement team distribute dental care materials at health fairs, community block parties, and neighborhood events and actively work to integrate dental programs into primary care services.



Collaboration with Wheeler’s nutritionist and toddler nutrition classes also are part of this effort.

Contribution & Collaboration

Wheeler, Mobile Crisis Featured in *U.S. News & World Report*

Wheeler and Connecticut's innovative Mobile Crisis program were featured in a July 10 story in *U.S. News & World Report*, "Mobile Help for Mental Health." Tiffany Hubrins, Wheeler program manager, was interviewed. Mobile Crisis is funded by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families in partnership with United Way and 2-1-1 Connecticut. Visit the News section of our website at www.wheelerclinic.org to read the full story.



Medication-Assisted Treatment (Continued from Page 4.)

MAT is available at the following locations:

Family Health & Wellness Center
43 Woodland Street, Hartford

Family Health & Wellness Center
75 North Mountain Road, New Britain

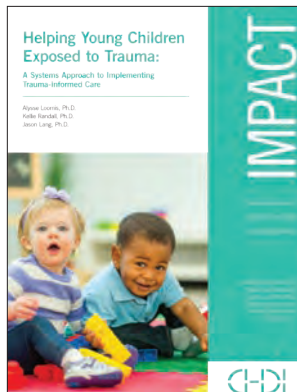
Family Health & Wellness Center
10 and 225 North Main Street, Bristol

Family Health & Wellness Center
100 Jefferson Square, Waterbury

Coming Soon!

For information, call 860.793.3500.

Early Childhood Team Contributes to CHDI Impact Report



Wheeler's Early Childhood team recently contributed to the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) June 2019 Impact Report, "Helping Young Children Exposed to Trauma: A Systems Approach to Implementing Trauma-Informed Care." Wheeler's Early Childhood leadership, including Melissa Mendez, LCSW, IMH-E, director of Early Childhood Programs, Flora Murphy, LCSW, program manager of Early Childhood Services in Hartford, and Tracy Krasinski, LCSW, program manager of Child First, provided expertise and clinical insights related to early childhood development and trauma to support the development of the report and to demonstrate the work being done across Connecticut.

The CHDI June 2019 Impact Report was authored by Alysse Loomis, Ph.D., Kellie Randall, Ph.D., and Jason Lang, Ph.D. To read the report, visit www.chdi.org.

Dr. Twist Part of Access Health CT Social Media Series on LGBTQ Health

Wheeler's Dr. Michael P. Twist, medical director, Psychiatry, was featured as part of Access Health CT's social media series on health and the LGBTQ community. The series featured perspectives on the state of health for the LGBTQ population in Connecticut, available services, barriers to care, and strategies for effectiveness.

Access Health CT is Connecticut's official health insurance marketplace established to meet the requirements of the federal Affordable Care Act. For more information about Access Health CT, visit www.accesshealthct.com.

To learn more about Dr. Twist, visit the Clinical Leadership page of our website at www.wheelerclinic.org/clinical-leadership.

Our LGBTQ community has a tremendous need for appropriate, responsive health care that treats each individual with dignity, respect and compassion.

Medical professionals have an obligation, not just to understand nuances but also to understand the variety of barriers which the LGBTQ community must face when accessing appropriate health care.

We are fortunate in Connecticut to have a progressive view, with more LGBTQ-centered health care providers than ever before.

Michael P. Twist, D.O.
Medical Director, Psychiatry
Wheeler Clinic

Caring for Our Communities

Health Center Week Celebration at Wheeler Family Health & Wellness Center, Hartford



The Wheeler Family Health & Wellness Center at 43 Woodland Street, Hartford is hosting a National Health Center Week Celebration on August 7 from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. The event, supported in part by the National Association of Community Health Centers, will feature information about our nutrition program and healthy vegetable recipes, tours of our community health center, activities for children, Zumba and cooking demonstrations, health and wellness information and resources, free food from Scotts' Jamaican Bakery, visits from community leaders, and more.

“Health centers are a vital part of the community, serving more than 28 million patients nationally and 392,000 people across the state,” said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer, Wheeler. “This event is designed to raise awareness of the role that health centers play and to engage local citizens in learning more about the broad array of primary care and behavioral health services offered.”

For information, contact **Keturah Kinch, MPA, director, Health Center Community Engagement**, Kkinch@wheelerclinic.org, or 860.793.7295. Follow updates on this observance on social media at #NHCW19, #ValueCHCs.



Weekend for a Lifetime

Members of Wheeler’s Foster Care team, the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF), and other local providers trained more than 40 potential foster families in April at “Weekend for a Lifetime,” a unique two-day event presented by DCF to equip potential families with skills, knowledge, and information they need to take on the role of fostering a child. Training topics ranged from child development, to grief and trauma, achieving permanency, and more. Learn more about Wheeler Foster Care at www.wheelerclinic.org/foster.



Wheeler Team Supports NAMI Walk 2019

Wheeler was a Start and Finish Line Sponsor of the 2019 NAMI Connecticut Walk on Saturday, May 18, 2019, in Bushnell Park, Hartford. This event, now in its 16th year, raises awareness and breaks down stigma associated with mental illness.

Learn more about the NAMI CT Walk and the Connecticut Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness at namict.org.



United Way of West Central Connecticut’s Day of Caring

Eight volunteers from The Pines of Bristol helped to beautify the grounds of Wheeler’s 91 Northwest Drive, Plainville location on May 17 as part of the United Way of West Central Connecticut’s Day of Caring. Volunteers, mulched, planted, and freshened up student garden areas, making the outdoors of this facility even more inviting for the individuals and families we serve.

Dollars and Change

Wheeler's 34th Annual Golf Classic Presented by Mutual of America Raises Nearly \$60,000, Crosses \$1.2-Million Lifetime Fundraising Mark

MUTUAL OF AMERICA
Your Retirement Company®

More than 150 golfers, supporters, volunteers, and friends took part in Wheeler's 34th Annual Golf Classic presented by Mutual of America at

the Country Club of Farmington on June 10—an event that raised nearly \$60,000 and crossed the \$1.2-million fundraising mark since its inception in 1986.

“We are truly grateful to our golfers, volunteers, and sponsors, including first-ever Title Sponsor Mutual of America, for supporting our mission and helping us to deliver high-quality, whole-person care to underserved individuals and families,” said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer, Wheeler.

This year, proceeds from the Golf Classic support Wheeler's community health centers in Hartford, New Britain, Bristol, and Waterbury, as well as the organization's Basic Needs Fund, which addresses a range of environmental and social factors that interfere with a patient's health and well-being and improves outcomes. The Basic Needs Fund tackles issues such as food insecurity and access to healthy options, transportation, childcare, healthy physical environments, and more.

Wheeler's 34th Annual Golf Classic was made possible by a number of local businesses, including Title Sponsor, Mutual of America; Platinum Dinner Sponsor, People's United Bank; Platinum Logo Sponsor, The Manafort Family Foundation; Golf Cart Sponsor, Loureiro Engineering; Lunch Sponsor, Gibbs; first-ever Golf Ball Sponsor, Guardian; and Beverage Cart Sponsor, Richard Cartland.

More photos available at WheelerClinic.org/golfclassic.



Title Sponsor Mutual of America

Platinum Dinner Sponsor
People's United Bank

Platinum Logo Sponsor
The Manafort Family Foundation

Lunch Sponsor, Gibbs

The Time to Give is Now



We need your support now more than ever to ensure the delivery of critical programs and services to children and families in our communities. Contributions can be made online at give.wheelerclinic.org, or by returning the adjacent pledge card. We appreciate all that you do to encourage health, recovery, and growth in the lives of the people we serve.

Will You Help?

Basic Needs Fund \$ _____

Your donation provides for the supports and services that insurance and other funding doesn't.

Wheeler Innovation Fund \$ _____

Your dollars allow our staff to experiment with new ideas and address issues with innovative approaches.

General Support \$ _____

Support the care of individuals, families, and communities across our state each year, through Wheeler's continuum of more than 100 services and programs.

Name (as you wish to see it printed)

Address

City State Postal Code

Telephone

Email

Enclosed is my total gift of \$ _____

Check enclosed **or** Charge my credit card

Visa Mastercard Discover AMEX

Account Number

Exp. Date Security Code

Signature

My employer will match my contribution. I have enclosed a matching gift form.

Please send me information about Planned Giving.

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Office of Philanthropic Giving

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GIVE TODAY. ENHANCE TOMORROW.

Donate to Wheeler's Basic Needs Fund

Wheeler's new **Basic Needs Fund** addresses a range of environmental and social factors that interfere with a patient's health and well-being.

Your support helps in the following areas:

- Food insecurity and access to healthy options
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Fostering healthy physical environments, and more.



To learn more about how you can help, please contact Wheeler's Marketing Communications and Philanthropic Giving Department at 860.793.4214 or giving@wheelerclinic.org.