



Community
Health & Wellness
Our Family – Taking Care of Yours



Annual Report

October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021



MOVING FORWARD...

With Resilience and Perseverance

Like every new year, we entered 2021 with hope for new beginnings and the thought of putting the pandemic and its effects behind us. Yet an unanticipated new surge of COVID-19 caused by a new, highly contagious variant, contributing to increased positivity rates, hospitalizations and deaths, consumed our lives both personally and professionally once again. Our healthcare heroes persevered, met the demands of the community for testing and vaccinations, all while keeping the needs of our own patients at the forefront.

We were faced with shortages in our workforce as exposures to the virus and positive tests among our employees impacted approximately 35% of our staff. Yet, we kept going and answered our community's call for help. We tested nearly 6,000 people and gave 380 vaccinations. We partnered with Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Torrington Area Health and New Opportunities as well as the office of Rural Health to address vaccine equity among vulnerable populations. We took BETTY on the road to those who were homebound and requested vaccines.

We developed a new partnership with Sharon Hospital to provide access to primary care through our mobile services and continue to collaborate with towns in the northwest corner to provide services where there is a critical lack of providers. Rural community leaders have embraced BETTY and we strive to embody the concept of **Bringing Exceptional Treatment To You!**

We were the only Health Center in CT, and one of 27 health centers nationally, who received a very competitive School Based Health Center grant, which will enable us to bring medical and mental health services to all the schools in the Torrington district. Our Behavioral Health Program Director was there when the teachers called as they struggled through the challenges that remote learning presented and the feelings of isolation that came with not being in the classroom with their students. We partnered with Friendly Hands Food Bank to provide food to those most in need and once again, our friends at Step by Step, generously made us the recipient of their annual coat drive and donated hundreds of coats for us to distribute.

It is safe to say that 2021 has been another challenging year, but once again, CHWC and the amazing staff have risen to the challenge and not only cared for their 6,000 patients, but for all members of the community when they needed a helping hand.

To the amazing and dedicated staff of Community Health & Wellness, thank you for all you have done and continue to do for our patients, the communities we serve and for one another. Thank you to the CHWC Board of Directors for your continued support and to our community partners for collaborating to help us meet our patient's needs. With hope, we look forward to a new year ahead, and one where we can see the smiles beyond the masks once again.

Joanne Borduas, MSN, MBA
Chief Executive Officer
Community Health & Wellness

MISSION & VISION

Mission

Community Health & Wellness (CHWC) is committed to keeping communities healthy. In a compassionate, high-quality, and patient-centered environment, services are accessible and provided without discrimination, with cultural competence, and where all people matter regardless of ability to pay. Through coalitions, advocacy and sound fiscal management, these services will be sustained over time.

Vision

CHWC will offer and continue to develop a range of healthcare services for the underserved throughout northwest Connecticut. It will achieve the reputation of provider of choice for affordable, high-quality services that achieve positive patient outcomes. A welcoming and caring environment will be experienced by all patients and their families.

An organizational culture will exist that attracts and retains skilled, dedicated employees. Sound fiscal management practices will ensure long-term viability. CHWC will collaborate and advocate with other organizations to increase the region's capacity to meet health and wellness needs.

CLINICAL PROGRAMS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH)

The BH Program continues to offer high quality care to the greater Torrington and Winsted community. This year, there were over 9000 unique client encounters, including 275 new clients, with approximately 90% of those visits in the Torrington location. There was also an increase in the number of group therapy sessions, which accounted for over 800 visits this year.

The Program also offered training opportunities to the staff at the Torrington Public Schools. These trainings included Self-Care Workshops and Trauma-Informed Care training. A partnership with the Torrington Awareness Prevention Program (TAPP) was developed to provide Trauma-Informed Communities training in Litchfield County.

Members of the BH team participate in the Litchfield County Opiate Task Force as well as the Executive Committee. There is a commitment to not only serving our clients, but also to serve the larger community, by supporting important community initiatives. Members of the BH team also participate on TAPP and serve as the Co-Chair, participate in the Northwest Caring Collaborative, a nutrition group dedicated to providing healthy meals to the Torrington community, as well as supporting Community Health Workers by offering support on a weekly basis for clinical issues that arise.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Telemedicine

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge healthcare providers and Health Center operations. Telehealth continues to be an essential tool in ensuring patients can access the healthcare services they need in a safe manner. Most payers have extended telehealth payments thru 2023 allowing telemedicine to remain part of our standard practice at CHWC in both our Torrington and Winsted locations.

COVID-19 Testing & Vaccinations

COVID-19 testing was conducted throughout the year and nearly 6,000 tests were administered to patients, staff, municipal partners, the public, and community-based organizations. CHWC partnered with the Torrington Area Health Department and other community agencies to target vaccine inequities. Through the efforts of the Vaccine Equity Partnership Funding (VEPF), 380 vaccines were administered to residents of the greater Torrington and Winsted community.

Mobile Medical Unit

The Mobile Medical Unit (MMU), BETTY, Bringing Exceptional Treatment to You, began providing services in November of 2021, to the Northwest Corner, where there is lack of access to medical services. CHWC partnered with Nuvance Health to bring BETTY to Sharon Hospital to provide primary care services, along with vaccines and COVID testing. To date, 147 clients have been served. Outreach efforts to locations that need healthcare services will continue, along with vaccination efforts for homebound individuals.

Diabetes Program

CHWC has developed a Diabetes Program that provides patients and community members in both Torrington and Winsted with a valuable resource for the prevention and management of diabetes through individualized, patient-centered services, that builds self-management skills. This program includes both a Center for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Diabetes Prevention Program and a Diabetes Self-Management Education Program. The interdisciplinary team includes a Registered Dietitian who is Board Certified in diabetes care, an Education Specialist, two Registered Nurses, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and a Community Health Worker.

The Diabetes Self-Management Education Program has received 70 referrals and completed 50 patient visits since its inception in June 2021. Program accreditation by The Association of Diabetes Care & Education (ADCES) as well as Medicare recognition will be completed in early 2022.

Podiatry continues to be a needed service, especially for the diabetes patient population. This past year, Joan Tekula, DPM, has conducted over 450 visits in our Torrington.

Allergy Program

In our Torrington location, CHWC launched the Allergy Program in partnership with Allehealth in December 2021. Allergies in patients of all ages are frequent and often unrecognized. Seasonal and year-round allergies can cause congestion, sneezing, itchy eyes, coughing, and discomfort. More serious allergies often lead to poor work or school performance, depression, and hospitalizations for asthma or other life-threatening medical conditions.

Two types of allergy tests are offered:

- An environmental test that tests for grasses, trees, molds, dust, and other things common in Connecticut
- A food test that tests for 28 of the most common food items

The test involves scratching the surface of your skin, adding a small amount of a pollen or other allergen, and assessing for an allergic reaction. If the test is positive a CHWC primary care provider can determine next steps, which may include immunotherapy. Immunotherapy is a series of injections designed individually for patients to treat allergies. It is safe and effective.

Chronic Care Management (CCM)

CHWC provides CCM as a critical component of primary care for all our patients that contributes to better health and care for individuals, as recognized by The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The CCM team, comprised of providers and nurses, offers additional help managing chronic conditions like hypertension and diabetes. This includes a comprehensive care plan that lists health problems and goals, other providers, medications, community service referrals, and other health information. CHWC offers 24/7 access to a healthcare provider for urgent needs.

School Based Health Center (SBHC)

CHWC was the only Connecticut Health Center awarded a two-year Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) SBHC grant, one of 27 grants awarded nationally. The mission of the SBHC is to improve the overall physical and emotional health of students to maximize their educational experience and potential. The goal is to expand services for primary care and behavioral health into all the Torrington schools and provide services regardless of ability to pay.

SBHC professionals work closely with community pediatricians, school nurses, LCSWs, Guidance Counselors, school faculty, and school administration. Two APRNs will provide primary care services including school physicals, vaccinations, sick visits, chronic care visits, health education, and address social determinants of health.

Two LCSWs will provide behavioral health services including evaluation and intake, individual therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Behavioral Therapy, Play Therapy, Game Play, and Family Therapy

DENTAL SERVICES

The Dental Department in Torrington continued to grow the team with two additional dentists, a hygienist, and two new Dental Assistants. Dental services in Torrington locations include fillings, cleanings, dentures, partials, and root canals. These services are now being offered in the Winsted location.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Summary of Activities

January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021

The Risk Management Committee identified goals for the 2021 calendar year. These goals addressed opportunities for improvement identified through a review of the 2020 data trends. The dedicated team positively impacted patient and employee safety over the past year.

The identified goals were:

- Develop a Culture of Safety throughout the organization
- Work toward a goal of zero harm
- Conduct a debriefing or a root cause analysis following occurrences to improve safety practices
- Achieve 100% compliance with hand hygiene and exam room cleaning

All safety events were reported, reviewed, and utilized as an opportunity to learn and improve processes. The Quality Department continued to utilize the process for performing debriefings following safety events. Debriefings provide the team with the forum to learn what opportunities there are for improvement as well as reinforce those things that are already going well.

Monthly hand hygiene and exam room cleaning audits were conducted. The audits included staff educational opportunities and were reported to the Infection Prevention Committee.

All staff received de-escalation training to educate them about managing conflict and aggressive behavior to minimize risk.

All these tactics contributed to successfully mitigating risk and improving patient safety.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Summary of Activities

January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021

The Continuous Quality Improvement Committee (CQI) identified goals for the 2021 calendar year. The multidisciplinary team worked to provide patients with high quality, safe care.

Clinical Quality and Patient Safety

Each department, including Medical, Dental, Behavioral Health, Patient Access and Human Resources, had quality metrics to achieve. The focus for clinical quality was based on the previous year's performance and input from department leaders. The quality team communicated results and met with leaders monthly to discuss these metrics and support improvement activities. On a quarterly basis throughout the year, each department refined their tactics to work toward success. The Human Resources Department and Behavioral Health Department exceeded goals for their metrics.

Patient Satisfaction and Loyalty

Patient satisfaction surveys are conducted for patients to provide feedback regarding the care they received from the Medical, Dental and Behavioral Health departments. The quality team met with department leaders throughout the year to share the survey results and patient comments, to celebrate what is working well and develop tactics to make improvements where needed.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

CHWC hosted a round-table discussion with Attorney General William Tong and other dignitaries including State Representative for the 64th District Maria Horn; State Representative for the 65th District Michelle Cook; Nancy Heaton, CEO, Foundation for Community Health; Lori Fedewa, Director, Office of Rural Health; Andrea Rynn, Assistance Vice President, Community Government and Public Relations, Nuvance Health; and Mark Hirko, MD, President, Sharon Hospital. The purpose of the discussion was to address the lack of primary care providers in towns north of Torrington; dispel the myth that poverty does not exist in those service areas; demonstrate chronic conditions are prevalent; and explore other data that may provide insights into the needs of residents.

For rural healthcare providers, these challenges present barriers to adequately addressing community healthcare needs and social determinants of health. Lack of access to both primary care and specialty services for the underserved patients in our northwest communities has reached a critical point, and the discussion addressed this issue and assisted with developing sustainable solutions that will strengthen the Northwest Corner's overall population health and economic vitality.

G R O W T H

Our Winsted location continues to rebound from having to close most of 2020 due to the Pandemic. Two medical providers, Dr. Lee and Tiffany Cesca, APRN, have opened appointments for Primary Care. Our Dental services operate one day per week in Winsted with a dentist and hygienist and behavioral health services are offered with an LCSW for individual therapy sessions. We can also offer COVID testing and vaccines to the Winsted community.

Our Canaan location is awaiting demolition of existing buildings to clear the land in order to construct our 7,300 square ft. building that will offer primary care and behavioral health services. We thank the Foundation for Community Health for their generous donation of \$1.3m to get the project under way. We continue to attempt to secure additional funding in order to meet the goal of beginning construction in 2022.

F I N A N C E

October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021, Community Health & Wellness continued to struggle due to the effects of COVID. While we worked to reopen and build back our business in 2021, our volume continued to increase. The Year End volume for 2020-2021 was 10.3% higher than the volume in 2019-2020 but (32.4%) lower than our budget. Net Patient Revenue followed with a 10.9% favorable revenue over last year and an unfavorable variance of (30.6%) to budget. We received COVID related grants which helped to offset the loss in patient revenue, helped us keep our staff employed, allowed us to purchase much needed PPE, and provided support for continued access to care. Due to these funds our Other Operating Revenue was 22.6% Favorable to budget and 31.3% favorable to the prior year. The favorable variance in Other Operating Revenue helped to offset the unfavorable variance in Net Patient Revenue resulting in a slight unfavorable Total Revenue of (3.7%) to budget and a favorable variance to last year of 23.2%.

Operating Expenses were 8.7% favorable to budget due to lower than budgeted staffing levels which lead to lower Benefit cost. We did, however, incur higher than budgeted expenses in Consulting for Finance, Billing, and Patient Access reorganization. We also hired an IT consultant during 2020 to help us build up our IT infrastructure. The favorable expenses offset the lower than budgeted revenue which resulted in a favorable Operating Net Income to budget of \$555k and the prior year's favorable revenue offset the unfavorable expenses resulting in Operating Net Income compared to prior year of \$182k.

Executive Staff

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Beth Chague
CFO

Board of Directors

Joanne Borduas *Ex-Officio*
President/CEO
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Greg Brisco
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CEO, Northwestern CT YMCA

Peter Duncan
Vice Chair
Consumer

Edward Arum
Treasurer
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Gina Bunch
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Jose Consepision
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Maria Gonzalez
Director of Community Services, N.O.W.

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