



Annual Report

October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022

On the Move...

With Resilience and Perseverance

Dear Respected Board Members, Staff, and Valued Partners,

Faced with many moving parts in the healthcare environment and continued concern with what has been termed as a “triple-demic”, a nonscientific term for COVID, Flu and RSV cases all at once, Community Health & Wellness Center’s (CHWC) agility and perseverance was once again tested.

Today I write with gratitude, very proud of the accomplishments we have been able to make this past year and inspired by the level of commitment to our mission by a staff of extraordinary healthcare heroes.

We continue to prepare for whatever tomorrow brings in what may be the next “New Normal.”

The framework for our accomplishments has been the creativity and determination demonstrated by our exceptional staff along with the help and support of our valued community partners.

Full Mobilization Against the Pandemic

Vaccinations	In collaboration with our community partners, CHWC kept pace with ensuring vaccination rates in the northwest corner met state targets. We held 112 vaccine clinics and vaccinated 800 people.
Grants	We participated in two collaborative grants with Torrington area community-based organizations and the Office of Rural Health to address vaccine equity and ensure our most vulnerable populations have access to COVID vaccines, education, and support. This included vaccinating children per CDC guidelines.
Infrastructure	We participated in creating a substantial infrastructure to address not only collection and sharing of vital statistics with HRSA and the State of CT for vaccinated populations, but also continued to evaluate processes and protocols to create a safe environment for our staff and patients.
Testing	Hundreds of COVID test kits were distributed to the community and our partners, including the Torrington area schools.
Mental Health	Mental health support sessions were offered to community partners, both on and off-site, for those who were dealing with increased stressors related to the pandemic.

Reimagined Operating Model

Technology	Additional investments were made in the technology infrastructure while pivoting to hybrid models of performing patient visits through telemedicine. In the past, patient visits were canceled due to unforeseen closures. Uninterrupted care remotely can now be provided when needed, allowing us to stay connected to those who need us most.
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Mobile Medical Unit	Primary care services provided on our Mobile Medical Unit increased access to care where it was lacking such as in the towns of North Canaan, Cornwall, Sharon, and Salisbury.
Outreach	<p>The team participated in several outreach events targeting underserved populations to raise awareness of the importance of vaccinations for COVID-19 and to address factors that contribute to health care disparities and inequities in our community.</p> <p>We invested in further strengthening our outreach team to develop a stronger presence in the communities we serve and make vital connections that will benefit CHWC and our patients. There was a specific focus on growing and rebuilding the Winsted health center location. We have successfully added dental services for community access three times per week and increased availability for access to primary care while continuing to offer mental health services.</p>
Strategic Plan	A three-year strategic plan and roadmap was developed that will serve as a guide to take us into a future of sustainability, growth, and expansion.
High Reliability Culture	There has been a focus on developing a culture of safety that incorporates High Reliability, improved communication, and building trusting relationships, which ultimately leads to effective teamwork.
Quality of Care	Our momentum has propelled us to strengthening our quality-of-care infrastructure by participating in Accountable Care Organizations to help our readiness for future alternative payment models that will look at quality of care and outcome measures.
Growth	Funding has been secured and a contractor has been selected to build CHWC's third location in the town of North Canaan. The timeline to commence construction is March 2023.
School-Based Health	School-based health services for the child and adolescent population has expanded with 270 students enrolled in our school program. This is a 10% increase from our baseline in 2021.
Dental Services	We began to rebuild our dental program, allowing access to oral health in both the Torrington and Winsted locations, by successful recruitment of dental staff.
Chronic Care Management (CCM)	CCM is a critical component of primary care 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 and includes a comprehensive care plan that lists health problems and goals, medications, community service referrals, and other health information. In 2022, there were 191 patients enrolled in the Chronic Care Management Program which resulted in 1,379 visits. This was an increase from 2021 of 138 patients and 618 visits.

We Lived Our Values

- In an environment of perpetual change, our staff responded to each new reality with the courage and strength to face personal, community, and professional challenges.
- With persistence, we cared for not only our patients but for widespread communities and for each other.
- Our staff sought to do more when it would have been easy not to. The team volunteered in the communities we serve, participated in after hour health fairs, and had discussions with UConn Health Center and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments to address the unmet needs of migrant farmworkers.
- There was a focus on expanding our programs to assist with social, economic, and health equity challenges.
- We celebrated 20 years of service!

Since our inception CHWC has become a partner to many addressing community needs and ensuring we carry out our mission of offering quality healthcare to all. Through challenging financial times, we exercised creative and financial stewardship and worked through the difficult task of prioritizing programs. As we look to the future, it is not without trepidation that we await the next challenge. Uniquely structured as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), we will continue to advocate for changes that will prove impactful to the populations we serve. CHWC will continue to be the community's safety net provider turning no one away from care regardless of insurance status, race, or ethnicity. We will work to build on our care delivery model in a culturally sensitive and fully integrated manner and continue to develop creativity and innovation that will advance our growth strategies.

As the CEO of CHWC, I am proud and honored to be leading an organization where people have risen to the challenges and are leading the way to healthier and safer communities.

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.

Behavioral Health (BH) Program

The BH Program has focused on continuing to provide high quality care while becoming a pillar in the community. There were over 10,000 unique visits this year and the School Based Health Center program saw over 1,000 unique visits. Most of the visits were to the Torrington location, which accounted for 85% of the visits.

This year also provided us with opportunities to engage with the community. Members of the BH team continued to provide direct support to the Torrington Awareness and Prevention Partnership (TAPP) as well as the Litchfield County Opiate Taskforce (LCOTF). We participate in the Executive Committee for the LCOTF, helping direct and effect change for people who use substances. We joined the Northwest Caring Collaborative and the Local Interagency Service Team (LIST) along with the Juvenile Review Board which focuses efforts on supporting the youth in our communities. We partnered with the Torrington Youth Service Bureau to provide a lecture at Oliver Wolcott Technical School on vaping, worked with TAPP to provide two trainings on Trauma Informed Communities, as well as the FIT Together program through Charlotte Hungerford Hospital to provide a discussion and informational session to parents about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCE's).

We were instrumental in launching the Community Care Team (CCT) with Charlotte Hungerford Hospital. A bi-weekly case management meeting, the CCT connects with community partners to share, discuss, and refer high-social needs clients to each other in an informal setting to reduce emergency department utilization and remove barriers for patients caught in the cycle of hospital visits.

Diabetes Program

The CHWC Diabetes Program provides patients and community members with a valuable resource for the prevention and management of diabetes. Our interdisciplinary team includes a Registered Dietician who is a Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist, two Registered Nurses with specialized training in diabetes education and a Community Health Worker who is an Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialist (ADCES) Certified Lifestyle Coach. Our team provides individualized, patient-centered care, which helps people to build the knowledge, confidence, and self-management skills to prevent and manage diabetes. In March of 2022 our Diabetes Self-Management Education Program was accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists (ADCES) and received Medicare recognition. Eighty percent of the program participants have improved their blood sugar control after working with one of our diabetes educators. In September of 2022, our Diabetes Prevention Program began its first cohort, with classes running through September of 2023. We are receiving enthusiastic responses from our participants.

Specialty Services

CHWC began offering Podiatry services 2 1/2 years ago. Patients are referred for diabetic foot care, various skin conditions, care of painful nails or callouses, and foot pain. There has been a demand for podiatry services and the department has seen rapid growth.

Chiropractic services at CHWC are thriving, with a specialization in treating conditions that affect the nervous system, muscular system, and skeletal system. High quality care is provided by our chiropractic provider.

Risk Management

Summary of Activities

January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022

The Risk Management Committee identified goals for the 2022 calendar year. These goals addressed opportunities for improvement identified through a review of the 2021 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. In Q2 2022 satellite facilities, the Mobile Medical Unit and FISH Shelter, were added to the audits. The audit results were reported to the Infection Prevention Committee. In Q4, medical was 99% compliant and dental was 100% compliant with hand hygiene. The only instance of noncompliance was followed up with education for that individual.

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

Continuous Quality Improvement Committee

Summary of Activities

January 1, 2022- December 31, 2022

The Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee identified goals for the 2022 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. In 2022, the Medical Department demonstrated quarterly improvement for all three cancer screenings. The Dental Department collaborated with the medical team to provide integrated care to patients with a diagnosis of diabetes. The Behavioral Health Department exceeded their goal for depression remission. The Patient Access Department met their goal for schedule fill rates and far exceeded their goal for abandoned calls, and the Human Resources Department met their goal for staff turnover and conducted a staff satisfaction survey with a 70% response rate.

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

340B Drug Program

With the help of our National Association, we will continue to advocate for the federal 340B Drug Pricing Program, which allows qualifying hospitals and clinics that treat low-income and uninsured patients to buy outpatient prescription drugs at a discount of 25 percent to 50 percent. The program is intended to help safety-net health care providers stretch their financial resources to reach more financially vulnerable patients and deliver comprehensive services.

Funding

We will continue to advocate for funding streams for Community Health Centers who serve as safety net providers and deliver care to 230,000 patients or 6.6% of the CT population at over 110 sites in rural and urban areas across the state. CHWC will continue to do their part in advocating for community health center funds to help support the most vulnerable of populations that we serve. We will be at the Capitol and at legislative sessions and committee meetings and we will host a legislative breakfast in March of 2023 to help raise awareness of important issues that impact long term sustainability of community health centers.

Finance

October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022

CHWC 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 slightly 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 build the 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

Joanne Borduas MSN, MBA, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Gina Burrows APRN, MSN, NEA-BC, Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Cathy Denault SPHR, SHRM-SCP, Chief Human Resources, and Compliance Officer (CHRO)

Laura Lacombe, Interim CFO

Rocco Russo MD, Medical Director

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Maria Gonzalez – Vice Chair

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Jeffrey Geddes – Secretary

Joanne Borduas Ex-Officio

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