



CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY BENEFIT REPORT

Creating a Stronger Future for Children and Families

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Dear Connecticut Children's Colleagues, Partners and Supporters,

As we celebrate 25 years of service to children and families in 2021, Connecticut Children's proudly continues our long-standing commitment to strengthening families to promote optimal child health, development, and well-being. In addition to providing high quality clinical, medical, and surgical care to accomplish this goal, Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health broadens these efforts to encompass community-focused initiatives that meet additional needs of children and families. With this clinical and community commitment, Connecticut Children's has an opportunity to reach children and families in underserved communities that are most impacted by social determinants of health, which are known to adversely affect children's health and development.

Similar to the year before, 2021 posed significant challenges for communities in Connecticut and nationwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the additional challenges the pandemic has brought to light, including escalating mental health concerns and inequities stemming from racial and social injustice. Connecticut Children's response to these challenges has been extensive. Our clinical teams spent countless hours treating COVID-19 patients and administering vaccines to team members, patients and community members. Our Emergency Department served record numbers of children and youth needing immediate intervention for mental health concerns. In addition, our leadership teams developed and implemented a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Framework as an ongoing commitment to strengthen our culture by reducing healthcare inequities, building a more diverse workforce, and providing team members with education and training on racism and unconscious bias.

In this Community Benefit Report, you will see how Connecticut Children's clinical and non-clinical teams actively addressed emerging needs brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as needs previously identified in our most recent Community Health Needs Assessment. You will see our efforts in supporting and empowering the children, families, and communities we serve. The report also includes Connecticut Children's financial commitment to community building efforts and specific highlights of our community-focused work.

At Connecticut Children's, we are proud that our pioneering clinical and community-focused approach to improving outcomes for children and their families is leading the way toward creating a brighter and stronger future for all.

Sincerely,

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SUPPORTING
CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES
THROUGH
MULTIPLE
CHALLENGES



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THROUGH MULTIPLE CHALLENGES

In 2021, children and families continued to endure the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as additional challenges the pandemic brought to light, such as escalating behavioral health needs and inequities stemming from racial and social injustice.

Unemployment, economic hardships, and disruptions to children's education started when the pandemic hit the United States in early 2020 and continued through much of 2021, which fueled escalating mental and behavioral health concerns. The effects of isolation due to COVID-19 became clear as the pandemic continued. Far more children in crisis turned to emergency departments around the country, including Connecticut Children's Emergency Department, seeking mental health care.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the co-occurring movement for racial and social justice highlighted the need for institutions in healthcare, government, housing, law enforcement and other sectors to address systemic inequities affecting people of color. Early in the pandemic, it became clear that the COVID-19 virus affected people of color to a far greater degree, as they were more likely to live in close proximity to others, serve as essential workers, and face health concerns that made them more susceptible to severe COVID-19 complications. As a result, people of color became sicker and died from the virus at far higher rates compared to the rest of the population, a trend that continued into and throughout 2021.

Connecticut Children's has committed significant resources to addressing each of these challenges in an effort to provide optimal care for our patients and their families, as well as to strengthen the communities we serve. Here is more information about select efforts in these areas:

Addressing Mental and Behavioral Health Needs

- **New mental and behavioral health leadership:** Jennifer Downs, MD, was named division head of pediatric psychiatry. She will work closely with Howard Sovronsky, LCSW, Connecticut Children's chief behavioral health officer; Melissa Santos, PhD, who leads the Division of Pediatric Psychology; and Allison Matthews-Wilson, LCSW, the director of care coordination. Together, they will develop an organization-wide strategy and continuum of care to meet the needs of patients during the escalating mental and behavioral health crisis.
- **Universal suicide screening:** Connecticut Children's Emergency Department saw a sharp increase in patients at risk for suicide. Providers in the ED screen all patients ages 10 and older for suicide risk. During the first half of 2021, 22% of children screened positive for suicide risk, compared to 16% during that timeframe the year before.
- **Behavioral Health Learning Community:** Connecticut Children's Care Network hosted a nine-part Behavioral Health Learning Community series for pediatric providers who are members of the Care Network. The series is designed to help community pediatricians provide better behavioral health-centered care to their patients. Session topics included anxiety, depression, ADHD, screening tools and community resources. About 170 providers from 30 practices participated.

- **Toolkit for families:** Connecticut Children's developed the Mental and Behavioral Health Kit featuring advice from our clinical experts to help families identify and address mental and behavioral health concerns in their children. The kit offered tips on supporting children's social and emotional well-being during COVID-19, advice on helping children reset from stress, and guidance for getting help for children at risk of suicide.

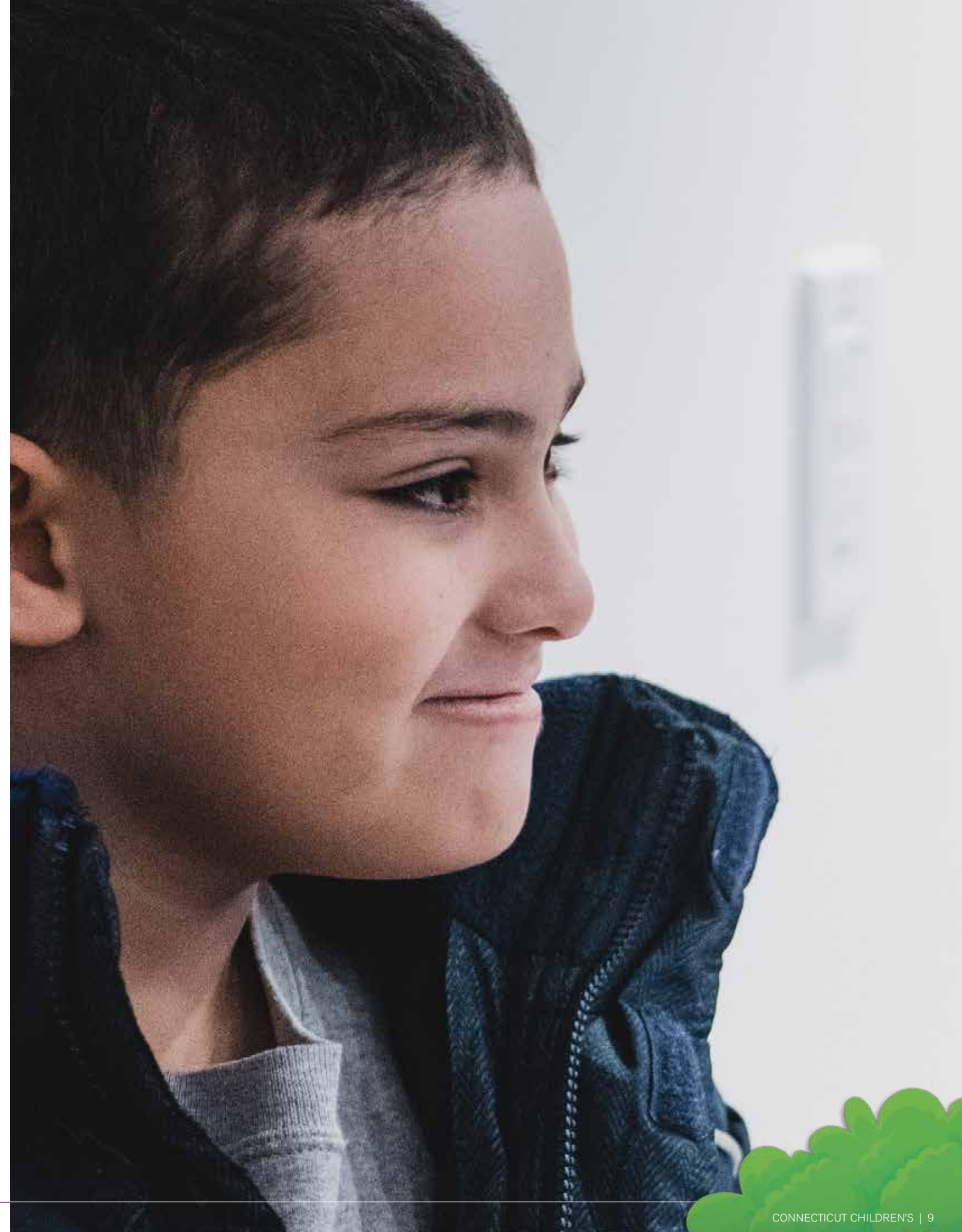
Addressing COVID-19 Needs

- **COVID-19 vaccines:** Connecticut Children's hosted COVID-19 vaccine clinics for team members, patients and community residents. During those clinics, team member volunteers administered more than 9,700 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to adults and more than 7,200 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to patients. In addition, Connecticut Children's partnered with Hartford HealthCare as part of our Pediatric Care Alliance to provide vaccine clinics to youth ages 12 to 15 when they became eligible.
- **COVID-19 testing:** Connecticut Children's continues to make COVID-19 testing available to team members and patients. Since the start of the pandemic, we have administered more than 15,500 tests.
- **Video visits:** Connecticut Children's continues to offer video visits to patients even though in-person office visits for our 30 subspecialties have resumed. Such visits fluctuate from week to week, but continue to comprise about 15 to 20% of our total appointments. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, clinicians have performed more than 85,000 video visits, providing patients with flexible and convenient access to quality medical care.
- **Ask the Experts webinars:** Connecticut Children's infectious diseases physicians hosted more than 50 Ask the Experts webinars to ensure community providers had the latest information on the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 650 unique people from 14 states attended the sessions and received more than 4,900 continuing medical education credits. The most popular topics included the development of a COVID-19 vaccine, school-related considerations and concerns during COVID-19, and ensuring a safe return to sports during COVID-19.
- **Toolkits for families:** Connecticut Children's developed toolkits featuring advice from our clinical experts to help families navigate the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Such toolkits included:
 - The **Back to School Kit** featured advice on helping children adjust to wearing masks, deciding whether to send children back to school, and packing additional items in backpacks beyond traditional school supplies.
 - The **Winter Kit for Families During COVID-19** provided advice for which activities were safest for children to participate in, mentioned engaging ways to keep children occupied indoors, and offered a winter fitness challenge for children and families.
 - The **Return to Play During COVID-19 Kit** provided child and teen athletes with tips on getting back into shape, avoiding injuries, and warming up before engaging in sports.
 - The **Next Normal Kit** offered guidance on new mask requirements, answered questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, and provided tips to help children cope with anxiety when social distancing ends.

- **Meeting families' basic needs:** Led by the Help Me Grow National Center at Connecticut Children's, Help Me Grow systems around the country mobilized to meet the basic needs of children and families. Together they distributed more than 1.1 million diapers, more than 1.4 million baby wipes, more than 16,000 ounces of formula, and more than 93,000 additional baby items.

Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- **Culture audit and assessment:** As part of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Framework, Connecticut Children's worked with an outside partner to conduct a culture audit and assessment. This included interviews with organization leaders, focus groups for team members, and an organization-wide survey. After releasing results of the audit and assessment, Connecticut Children's convened team member volunteers into work groups to develop recommendations for enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Declaration:** Connecticut Children's released its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Declaration after compiling feedback from the culture audit and assessment and team member work groups. The declaration is a key part of Connecticut Children's diversity, equity and inclusion journey and focuses our efforts going forward.
- **Organization statement on racism, discrimination and bias:** Connecticut Children's released a statement pledging to work with team members, patients, families and community partners across sectors to reduce the racial and social divide and advance equity.
- **Strategic staffing:** This effort helps to ensure a more diverse workforce through the adoption of new processes to attract candidates who are more diverse and achieve a greater balance across workforce representation over time.
- **Team member education:** Connecticut Children's developed the Authentic Conversations in Diversity program, which utilizes facilitated dialogue to create safe spaces for team members to talk about and address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Topics offered include affinity bias, ageism, gender bias, microaggressions, racism, stereotypes and unconscious bias. Connecticut Children's also launched a self-guided diversity, equity and inclusion learning pathway for team members.
- **Team member awareness:** Connecticut Children's provided team members with resources and learning opportunities to broaden understanding about a variety of cultures. These efforts include recognizing six culture awareness months; sponsoring a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Speaker Series; offering pediatric grand rounds sessions, symposiums and forums focused on diversity, equity and inclusion; and making various resources, reading recommendations and event information available on an enhanced intranet page.
- **Team member initiatives:** As part of our diversity, equity and inclusion journey, Connecticut Children's divisions and programs are working on plans to strengthen their office cultures. Here are some examples of this work:
 - **Pathways to Action:** Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health launched the Pathways to Action initiative to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion within the Office. Pathways to Action offered team members a series of town halls and anti-racism grand rounds sessions; formed an equity committee; drafted a statement on racism, discrimination and bias that was endorsed by the larger organization; and suggested improvements to make hiring practices more equitable.
 - **Women in Surgery podcast:** Connecticut Children's Women in Surgery group launched a podcast to provide a platform for women surgeons to network, share their successes, and work to eliminate barriers that prevent women from entering the field. The podcast series is now available on Connecticut Children's website and on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify and Stitcher.



HOW DO WE DEFINE COMMUNITY BENEFIT?

Community-focused initiatives at Connecticut Children's directly address needs identified during our triennial Community Health Needs Assessments, and we report our progress in addressing those needs annually in our Community Benefit Reports. Our community benefit reporting includes uncompensated care, research, and education, in accordance with federal requirements. It also includes our community-building activities that address the social determinants of health, which are the conditions in which people live, work and play. Such determinants have a profound impact on overall health, development and life outcomes, especially for families in economically challenged neighborhoods that are more likely to be underserved by healthcare and other sectors. Our community building work includes addressing mental and behavioral health concerns, preventing injuries, ensuring children are prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten, promoting nutrition and physical activity to prevent obesity, improving housing conditions, and furthering economic development. Our commitment to embracing a broader definition of community benefit, beyond what is required by the federal government to maintain tax-exempt status, is central to our approach in promoting children's optimal health, development and well-being.

Our Total Community Benefit in FY2020:

**\$90.34
million**



OUR COMMUNITY BENEFIT BY CATEGORY

\$60.75
million

Services for Uninsured or Underinsured Patients

About 55% of patients treated at Connecticut Children's rely on Medicaid for insurance, which does not fully reimburse the cost of care. Connecticut Children's also provides significant services to children and families that lack health insurance and cannot pay for medical care.

\$20.95
million

Education for Health Professionals

Connecticut Children's serves as the primary pediatric teaching hospital for the UConn School of Medicine and maintains a teaching partnership with the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University. We offer undergraduate medical education; graduate medical residency and fellowship programs; and post-graduate continuing medical education. We also offer training and education programs for nursing, social work, and other clinical areas of focus.

\$3.74
million

Research Operating Expenses

Connecticut Children's invests in research to develop, test, and deploy the latest advances in medical and surgical care. We are a partner of The Jackson Laboratory, a genomics research center. Our physicians regularly present their research studies at conferences; publish their work in peer-reviewed journals; and author books or chapters of books. Expenses in this category reflect costs related to maintaining our research infrastructure.

\$4.90
million

Community Building and Health Improvement Efforts

Connecticut Children's community-focused work includes the efforts of Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health (the Office) and Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA). This category includes infrastructure support for the Office; annual dues paid to SINA; legislative advocacy efforts; counselors employed to enroll families in Medicaid; time employees spend serving on Boards of Directors for outside organizations; and time employees put toward our annual Day of Caring and United Way campaigns.



ADDRESSING NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN OUR COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

PRIORITY AREAS

Mental Health, Behavioral Health and Trauma

Housing, Environment and Community Factors

Childhood Obesity Prevention

School Readiness



MENTAL HEALTH, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND TRAUMA

Saving Lives with Youth Suicide Screening

During a routine suicide screening, an 11-year-old patient at Connecticut Children's Emergency Department confided in her medical provider that she had thoughts of suicide.

Her shocked mother turned to her daughter and asked, "Why didn't you tell me about this?"

Her daughter replied, "Because you never asked." She then turned to her provider and said that she had been thinking about suicide for a long time now but did not know who to talk to about it. Because of the screening, providers were able to connect her with the help she needed.

It's among the most powerful examples to emerge from the universal suicide screening program that providers in Connecticut Children's Emergency Department (ED) launched in 2020. The program screens all patients ages 10 and older who visit the ED for suicide risk, regardless of the treatment they are seeking.

Developing the Universal Screening

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 34 in the United States. In 2019, the Joint Commission, the national accreditation body for hospitals, announced a need for providers to screen patients for suicide risk and that inspired our ED to explore what it could do to further help young patients. Providers, nurses and the quality improvement team developed and implemented the universal suicide screening program for the ED, where providers typically care for more than 60,000 patients each year.

The team established the age of 10 as the youngest age for the screening since that is that age in which the risk for suicide starts to escalate. They identified a validated screener that includes direct questions that patients would be asked, such as "In the past few weeks, have you wished that you were dead?" and "Have you ever tried to kill yourself?"

The ED provided training for nurses, who are responsible for administering the initial screen, as well as for the physicians and advanced practice providers who are responsible for administering a secondary suicide assessment tool to confirm the initial screen and determine a child's level of risk.

The team identified resources to refer low- and moderate-risk patients to, who are typically not in immediate danger and are discharged home. They also developed a plan to help those children who screen at high-risk and need inpatient or immediate outpatient intervention. Part of that plan includes utilizing Connecticut Children's Behavioral Health Transitions Clinic, which is a novel clinic in the ED where higher-risk patients can connect with a psychiatrist, a social worker and a care coordinator within days of arriving at the hospital for help. The clinic provides care patients would typically wait weeks or even months to receive if it did not exist.

Success of the Universal Screening

In its first year, ED providers screened well over 16,000 children and more than 2,600 of them, or about 16%, screened positive for suicide risk. Of those who screened positive, about 5% visited the ED for medical-only chief complaints, as opposed to a mental health chief complaint, and may never have been identified as having suicide risk elsewhere. In 2021, the percentage of children and youth screening positive for suicide risk rose to 22%, with 8% of those patients seeking help for medical-only chief complaints.



Aside from preventing suicide, normalizing the conversation about suicide is among the screening program's top goals. Talking about suicide does not cause it or contribute to the risk, according to ED providers. Instead, they stress that it is likely to be protective and relieving for a child to know that it is okay to talk about it and to seek help.

Going forward, Connecticut Children's hopes to expand the universal suicide screening program to all clinical departments in the health system and to community-based primary care providers.

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY FACTORS

The Health Impact of Housing

Andrea Bailey and her three children settled into their home in Hartford unaware that it contained asbestos, mold, lead and other hazards that could threaten their health. The family had already experienced significant health challenges and once they realized the extent of the concerns with their home, the Baileys turned to Connecticut Children's for help.

"It was very hard"

Andrea's daughter Jenna-Lee, now 7 years old, was born with only one valve in her heart and it was leaking, according to Andrea. At the time, doctors at Connecticut Children's Division of Cardiology were concerned that she was too weak to survive surgery, so they kept a close eye on her.

"When she was 2 years old, we had the surgery. It was very hard. After the surgery, Jenna-Lee went into cardiac arrest. Her heart failed but they were able to start it back again," says Andrea. "It's stressful when a mother sees her child there with all these tubes. It's a scary thing."

Caring for Jenna-Lee after the surgery was challenging. Andrea had to take precautions to ensure the wound stayed closed as it healed, and she cleaned it regularly. They also continued frequent checkups with Jenna-Lee's cardiologist.

As time passed, the Baileys were able to scale those checkups back to annual visits, as Jenna-Lee fully bounced back from her heart surgery. "She is doing well now. She has recovered," says Andrea.

"We need to spread the word"

In addition to Jenna-Lee's health challenges, the Baileys learned the home they purchased and moved into just a few years earlier was unhealthy and in desperate need of repair.

A contractor who was hired to assess the roof looked around the rest of the home and realized there were other issues in need of attention for the health of the Bailey children. He referred the family to Connecticut Children's Healthy Homes Program (Healthy Homes), which raises awareness around Connecticut about the critical link between housing quality and health, and helps families like the Baileys find and fix health hazards in their homes.

After conducting an assessment, Healthy Homes was able to remove asbestos and mold from the Baileys' basement and lead from elsewhere in the home – toxins that could have caused long-term health and developmental concerns for the Baileys. In addition to replacing tiles, drywall and windows, they also added safety bars to the windows in the children's bedrooms to prevent falls.

Healthy Homes relocated the Bailey family to a hotel during part of the renovations to avoid contamination. Andrea was touched when she heard how Jenna-Lee described the experience: "My family is together and that's all that matters," Jenna-Lee told her teacher.

"I'm happy that she understands," says Andrea.

The Baileys returned home once the work was completed and air quality testing showed it was safe. Jenna-Lee and her siblings are thrilled to be back in their family home – and Andrea is thrilled to know that it is a safe place for them to grow up.

"I am going to make sure that if I see anybody that's going to need the help, I'll refer them to Healthy Homes. I know a lot of people don't know about this and we need to spread the word," says Andrea.



CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION

Planting Seeds for a Healthy Future

The COVID-19 pandemic proved to be a challenging time for children and families to stay active and eat healthy. Stay at home orders kept many people indoors and in front of screens for much longer than is recommended. To ensure parents kept healthy eating and activity on their minds, Connecticut Children's clinical and community programs reached out in new and engaging ways to help families thrive.

Wellness-themed kits

Connecticut Children's Start Childhood Off Right (SCOR) program promotes healthy nutrition and physical activity from birth to establish healthy habits early and reduce childhood obesity. SCOR focuses its outreach efforts on families with children ages birth to 5. During COVID-19, SCOR partnered with the Hartford Public Library to provide wellness-themed grab and go kits for Hartford residents. Gardening kits proved to be popular, which included soil, planters, gardening tips, nutritional information, and seeds supplied by KNOX, a Hartford-based organization that uses horticulture as a catalyst for community engagement. Make your own lantern kits were also a hit. The idea behind the kits was to encourage families to enjoy the outdoors while staying active.

In addition, SCOR distributed more than 200 nutrition toolkits to families through pediatric primary care providers. Each toolkit included a developmentally appropriate feeding item, such as a bib or sippy cup, and flyers detailing age-appropriate feeding guidelines to promote healthy eating.

SCOR also continued to support community gardens at five community and family centers in Hartford by replenishing gardening materials. The program initially worked with the local centers to build gardening boxes at each site before the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

Virtual yoga classes

SCOR offered virtual prenatal yoga and breastfeeding education classes in partnership with the Stronger Families, Stronger Futures program in Hartford. Participants appreciated the convenience of logging in from their home computers to participate in the classes.

Participants found the classes to be relaxing and helpful in managing their pregnancies. At the end, they reported understanding the importance of developing an exercise routine if they did not have one already. They particularly liked poses that promoted prepping for childbirth such as the pelvic tilt. Expectant mothers offered the following comments about the classes:

- "The stretches help my back, hips, and legs, and the breathing exercises relieve my stress and relax my mind to sleep much better."
- "I now do yoga two times a week which is new to me but I know this helps me a lot as well as my baby."
- "Yoga is a new exercise in my life that benefits my health and the health of my baby."

Ensuring children and families are healthy

Connecticut Children's Weight Management Program (Weight Management) works with children who have obesity and their families in a multigenerational approach to ensure they become the healthiest families they can be. The program saw firsthand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and families and responded in innovative ways to continue meeting their needs.

Stay-at-home orders and virtual schooling proved challenging for families in the program, with many residing in Hartford. In addition, reduced access to healthy food and options for physical activity, which were already scarce for many families before the pandemic, presented additional concerns. Heightened stress also played a role for families, as many caregivers served by the program are essential workers, live in high-density housing, and have other health concerns, which put them at greater risk for COVID-19 and its complications. To ensure families were at their healthiest and in the best position to fight COVID-19, Weight Management shifted to offering virtual appointments for children and families in the program. The program also returned to offering in person visits as soon as possible, as not all families were able to connect with clinicians via the internet.

Weight Management offered creative recommendations to families, including encouraging them to stock up on staple foods with long shelf lives, recommending they use low-cost yoga balls as desk chairs, and urging them to take frequent walks. The program continued offering online support groups so families could connect with each other and opened additional psychology visits to ensure clinicians could address the escalating mental health impact of the pandemic. In addition, the program organized an eight-part Facebook Live series promoting healthy habits, with sessions exploring strategies for planting an herb garden, prepping meals in advance, and the health benefits of walking.



SCHOOL READINESS

Preparing Children for Education Success

The COVID-19 pandemic proved to be a challenging time for educators and students who had to balance remote and in person learning for much of the 2020-2021 academic year. In urban areas like Hartford, already existing learning gaps widened as students struggled to maintain their skills, despite reduced or even no in person classroom time throughout the year. In addition, disruptions to early education programs challenged the youngest of learners. Connecticut Children's continued its commitment to ensure children are ready to succeed in school through programs that made an impact locally and nationally.

Imagination Library Serves Families in Hartford

A child's ability to read at grade level by third grade is a strong predictor of their future success. There is no better way to prepare children to read at grade level than by getting books into their hands early. One year after bringing Imagination Library to Hartford, the program has seen much success.

Imagination Library is a program founded by Dolly Parton to promote early childhood literacy in her hometown of Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The program mails each enrolled child a new developmentally appropriate book every month from birth through age 5, building a home library of up to 60 books by the time a child enters kindergarten. Today, Imagination Library chapters exist across the United States and in other countries.

Connecticut Children's President and CEO James E. Shmerling, DHA, FACHE, led an effort to establish the Imagination Library chapter in Hartford and enlisted support from Hartford Hospital, Trinity Health of New England and The United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut to bring the program to the city. Each partner committed to a two-year, \$25,000 per year contribution. United Way provides logistical support for Imagination Library including enrolling families, maintaining address lists, and promoting the program through its vast network of partners that already connect with Hartford children.

Since its launch in 2020, 650 children have enrolled in Hartford's Imagination Library program and the program has delivered more than 3,650 books to enrolled children.

Identifying and Addressing Developmental Concerns Early to Increase Classroom Success

The Help Me Grow National Center (HMG National Center), which is a program of Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health, continues to work with HMG affiliates around the country to advance innovative strategies that set children up for academic success in their earliest years. In a recent initiative, the HMG National Center hosted a community of practice to help HMG affiliates work with early learning centers to increase developmental screenings and the connection of children to helpful services.

Nine HMG affiliates participated in the community of practice and attended virtual learning sessions led by the BUILD Initiative; HMG Orange County, California; HMG Vermont; and Childhood Prosperity Lab, which is another program of Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded the project to better integrate HMG affiliates with early learning settings, since they have access to children at their earliest ages and are often the first to notice when concerns arise. The BUILD Initiative provided guidance to participating HMG affiliates on utilizing state quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS) to enhance the identification of children with developmental concerns as well as their connection to helpful services. HMG Orange County and HMG Vermont provided participants with guidance on implementing projects they developed locally utilizing QRIS.

As part of the project, participating HMG affiliates worked with early learning providers to increase rates of developmental screening in their settings as well as increase referrals to HMG, where specialized care coordinators connected identified children to helpful services. By identifying and addressing developmental and behavioral concerns early, research shows children are better prepared to start kindergarten and have more success during their academic careers.

The project produced impressive results. Specifically, participants reported a notable increase in early learning settings conducting developmental screenings, increasing from 450 to 1,200 in communities where participating affiliates tracked this metric. In addition, some participating affiliates reported an increase in referrals to HMG Centralized Access Points from early learning settings as a result of the screenings. Some affiliates reported lingering challenges in getting early learning settings to move beyond the identification of concerns to initiating referrals to HMG for help.

Lessons learned from this community of practice are being disseminated across the entire HMG National Affiliate Network, which consists of 111 systems in 29 states across the country. Learn more about this work here: <https://helpmegrownational.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Enhancing-Developmental-Promotion-Early-Detection-Referral-and-Linkage-to-Services-within-Early-Learning.pdf>





A CLOSER LOOK

SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE



A CLOSER LOOK

Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance

At Connecticut Children's, we recognize that the health and well-being of a neighborhood affects the health and well-being of the children and families who live there. As a member of the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA), Connecticut Children's collaborates with our partners, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College, to improve the quality of life for residents in the south end of Hartford. We review data to inform our approach for elevating the neighborhoods that surround our main hospital campus. Our goal is to build a healthier community.

Supporting student success

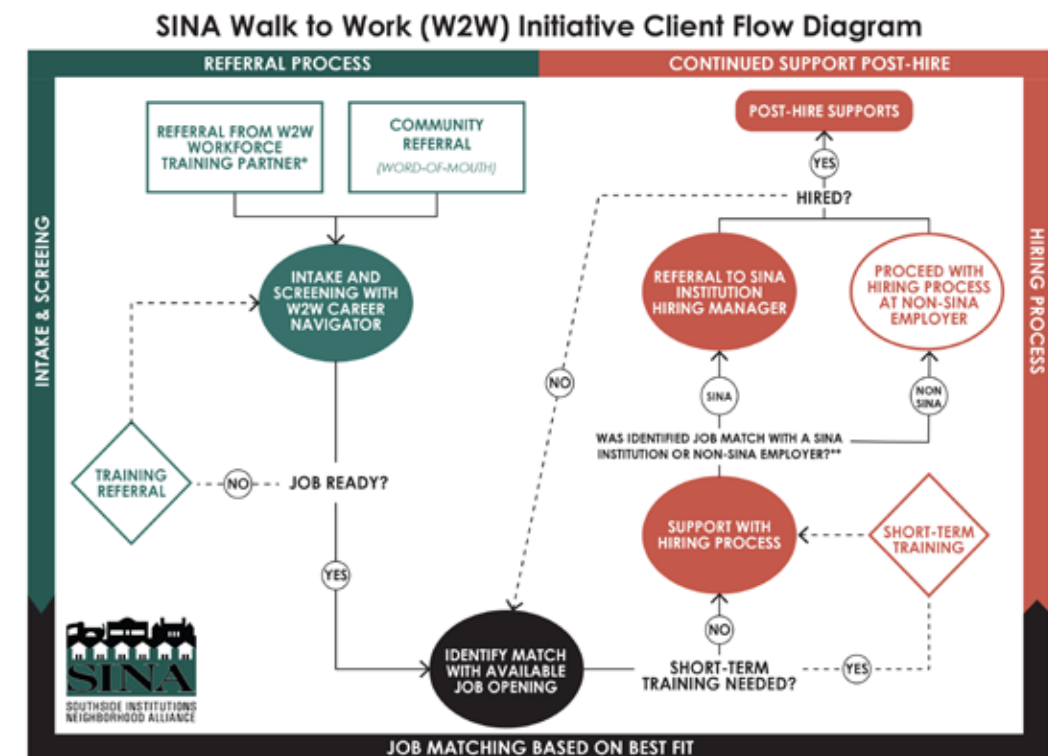
Nearly 40% of residents in the SINA Impact Area (Census tracts 5027 and 5028) have not completed high school by age 25, so we partner with Hartford Public Schools to improve outcomes for students.

- Early childhood literacy: SINA helps connect families to Hartford's Imagination Library chapter.
- School reading skills: SINA recruits volunteers from its member institutions to support summer reading programs for elementary school students attending neighborhood camps. Guest readers share stories with students about why they chose their careers and what books they like to read.
- Access to college: The Ivan Backer Scholarship provides \$4,000 scholarships to Bulkeley High School graduates pursuing four-year college programs. The selection process includes a focus on honoring students with a demonstrated commitment to community service. Also, SINA Student Support Scholarships help neighborhood residents who are attending Capital Community College to offset the cost of their textbooks.



Promoting access to employment

The SINA Impact Area has an unemployment rate of 12-13%, a median household income of \$29,551 and a poverty rate of nearly 35%. In this map, SINA sees an opportunity to connect adults in Hartford's south end with employment opportunities at its member institutions. In January 2018, SINA launched the Walk to Work (W2W) initiative with a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. W2W connects neighborhood residents to available, entry-level jobs at the SINA member institutions. The typical W2W client is a young woman (45% under age 30 and 75% female) without a college degree (58% hold a high school diploma/GED or have completed some college). The client flow diagram below shows how the initiative works.



*Billings Forge Community Services, Capital Region Education Council (CREC), Capital Workforce Partners (CWP), Capital Community College, Center for Latino Progress (CLP), Central Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford (LVGH), Our Piece of the Pie (OPP)
 **SINA Institutions: CT Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital, Trinity College
 Diagram produced by Cross Sector Consulting, LLP for SINA W2W Final Evaluation Report: April 2021, Hartford, CT.

In its first three years, nearly 100 people have found employment with an average hourly wage at placement of \$15.46. In addition, 64% of those hired worked 40 hours per week and 97% worked more than 20 hours per week. SINA attributes W2W's success to its convenient location in the SINA neighborhood, the availability of individualized career navigation services, and its direct connection to job openings at the SINA institutions.





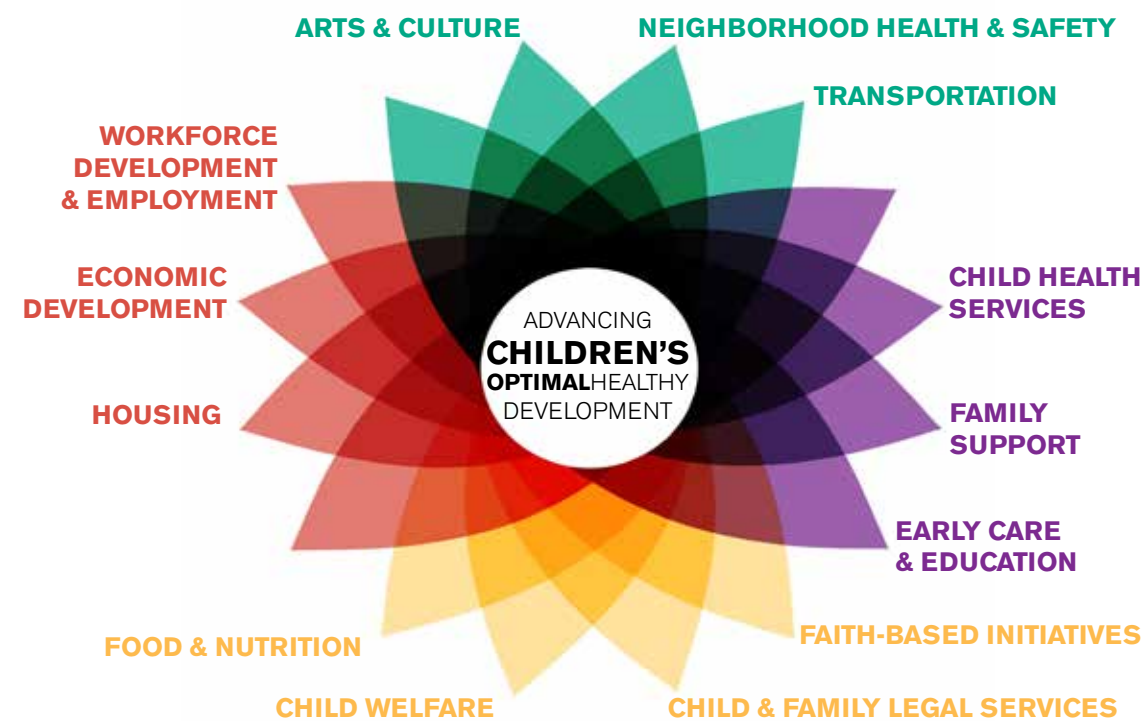
A CLOSER LOOK

CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S OFFICE FOR COMMUNITY CHILD HEALTH

A CLOSER LOOK

Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health

Connecticut Children's is a national leader in supporting families and communities to promote optimal health, development, and well-being of all children, especially those who are at risk for adverse outcomes. Formed in 2012, Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health (the Office) is recognized as a pioneer in utilizing a cross-sector approach to build stronger child-serving systems, strengthen families and advance equity. Paul H. Dworkin, MD, leads the Office after previously serving as Connecticut Children's physician-in-chief for 15 years. Under his vision and direction, the Office helps shape federal, state and local policy regarding child services; builds partnerships between internal and external programs across all sectors that influence child health, development and well-being; and cultivates innovations to support children who are at risk for poor health and life outcomes.



CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S OFFICE FOR COMMUNITY CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS:

The Office promotes children's optimal health, development and well-being through its programs and advocacy. Office programs strengthen families, physician practices and communities to help all children reach their full potential. The following chart highlights each Office program along with its specific areas of focus.



	ENHANCING INNOVATION	PROMOTING CHILD HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT	STRENGTHENING CHILD HEALTH SERVICES	ADVANCING RESEARCH & EDUCATION	PROVIDING DIRECT SERVICES TO FAMILIES	INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY
Care Coordination Collaborative Model	●		●			●
Center for Care Coordination	●	●	●	●	●	
Childhood Prosperity Lab	●	●	●			
Children's Center on Family Violence		●	●	●		●
Co-Management	●		●	●		
Connecticut Newborn Diagnosis & Treatment Network		●			●	
Easy Breathing	●		●	●		●
Educating Practices		●	●	●		
Hartford Youth HIV Identification and Linkage Consortium		●	●		●	
Healthy Homes Program		●	●		●	●
Help Me Grow National Center	●	●	●	●		●
Injury Prevention Center			●	●	●	●
Person-Centered Medical Home		●	●		●	
Practice Quality Improvement			●	●		
Resident Education in Advocacy and Community Health		●	●	●	●	
Start Childhood Off Right		●	●			

For more information on the programs of Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health, visit our website: connecticutchildrens.org/community-child-health/



COMMUNITY PROGRAM QUICK FACTS FROM 2020:

- **Childhood Prosperity Lab** (the Lab) advances innovative strategies that address the social, environmental, and behavioral drivers of health and help children reach their full potential. The Lab works with organizations in sectors known to impact the healthy development of children, including child welfare, early care and education, and nutrition. The Lab provides consultation, technical assistance, coaching, and other supports as organizations pursue their desired level of impact. During 2020, the Lab advanced five innovative strategies addressing different facets of child health and consulted with seven changemakers.
- The **Children's Center on Family Violence** (CCFV) is a collaboration between the injury prevention and child abuse programs at Connecticut Children's and the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV). This program works to reduce the impact of family violence on children. It started three new initiatives during the pandemic:
 - deploying messages about domestic violence resources via Connecticut Children's telephone on-hold messaging, virtual waiting rooms and electronically-generated after visit summaries;
 - enhancing CCADV advocacy for children entering shelters and motels, leveraging expertise at Connecticut Children's to help CCADV advocates support these children in new ways; and
 - piloting universal education about domestic violence and its impact on children in Connecticut Children's child abuse outpatient clinic and via telehealth visits.
- The adoption of **Co-Management** pediatric provider referral guidelines increased during 2020 by 77%, with verified clinical provider users increasing to 426 across the region. Co-Management debuted an easier to navigate internet experience, in which pediatric primary care providers can search for referral guidelines by specialties and conditions. Such guidelines help providers expand their scope of practice by screening, evaluating, and managing common pediatric health concerns more independently within their own practices instead of referring them to specialists. The website improvements provide enhanced data on users, which allows the program to determine that adoption of the tools by region is increasing over time. This past year, the program increased its portfolio of referral guidelines to cover six new conditions, with its overall portfolio comprising 41 conditions.
- **Connecticut Children's Center for Care Coordination** (the Center) supported 1,461 patients and their families in FY20. Highlights of its work include:
 - receiving its third consecutive grant from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs, which provides a total of \$2 million over five years to support the expansion of community-based efforts to address pandemic-related needs of families and provide increased behavioral health care coordination;
 - engaging community-based pediatric providers through **Connecticut Children's Care Network** to ensure patients of Care Network providers can easily access needed clinical and community-based services. This work is funded by the DPH grant, along with additional grant and endowment dollars; and
 - implementing a new model of integrated care coordination at Connecticut Children's that leverages organizational synergies, Lean improvements, and technology platforms to provide best in class services to children and families. The model integrates four departments to provide care across the continuum: inpatient case management, inpatient/outpatient social work, community care coordination, and behavioral health social work in the Emergency Department.

- Connecticut Children's Center for Care Coordination continues to house the **Care Coordination Collaborative Model**, which improves collaboration among care coordinators from diverse sectors in order to connect children and families to effective services and reduce duplication of services across sectors. The model brings care coordinators together for periodic meetings as part of the North Central Regional Care Coordination Collaborative to learn how to help families access available services; to review challenging cases and develop solutions for families; and to advocate for policy level solutions to help families address the challenges they face in connecting to services. It also serves as a model for other care coordination collaboratives around the state.
- Despite experiencing a temporary shutdown during the pandemic, **Connecticut Children's Healthy Homes Program** realized a record year of service to children and families in 2020. Application volume jumped 50% and the program expanded into more than 40 towns. Healthy Homes redesigned key elements of its program in an effort to support social distancing measures. Household education, contract signings and screening for cross-sector referral opportunities all shifted virtual. Also, Healthy Homes secured a new \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Housing. The grant will support Healthy Homes' expansion to meet the needs of families statewide. Additionally, the grant will support investment in job creation in healthy housing fields with a focus on hiring in communities served by the program. The grant also includes support to expand the Building for Health cross-sector referral program from a Hartford-based pilot project to a statewide referral network.
- Highlights of **Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center's** work in 2020 included:
 - contributing to the examination of the impact of COVID-19 by publishing *Initial impact of COVID-19's stay-at-home order on motor vehicle traffic and crash patterns in Connecticut: an interrupted time series analysis in the journal Injury Prevention*;
 - shifting the Hayley Petit Injury and Violence Prevention Fellowship to a virtual program, providing a program for women college students to learn the science of injury prevention;
 - recruiting Dr. Flaura Winston of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to present the IPC's annual Grand Rounds session. Dr. Winston's presentation focused on the impact of COVID-19 on teen driving behavior; and
 - hosting two medical residents as part of the Resident Education in Advocacy and Community Health program who focused on issues related to suicide risk screening and the uptick in crash fatalities during the COVID-19 period.
- In response to COVID-19, the **Connecticut Newborn Diagnosis and Treatment Network** (The Network) developed and implemented a telehealth video system to increase access to healthcare, and to improve follow-up services to families and healthcare providers throughout the state of Connecticut. The Network collaborated with the organization Parents Available to Help (PATH) to create Connecticut's first Newborn Screening Family Advisory Group, and to initiate prenatal education for newborn screening in Connecticut.
- The **Easy Breathing** asthma management program is now more accessible than ever through digital technology that enabled continued use by providers during the pandemic. Providers at Community Health Center (CHC) in Hartford folded digital Easy Breathing into their telehealth visits, ensuring patients with asthma would continue to receive the same level and frequency of care they enjoyed prior to the shift. CHC prioritized patients with asthma for telehealth visits to assess asthma control and make sure asthma treatment plans remained up to date. The Cigna Foundation funds this project.
- **Educating Practices** shifted its presentations and training sessions to an online format so pediatric practices could remain up to date on important child health issues and resources in their communities to provide optimal support to families during COVID-19. This includes 21 virtual training modules available to pediatric practices, an online presentation for pediatric providers addressing family stress during the pandemic, and a webinar for pediatric providers covering behavioral health resources for families.
- The Hartford Youth HIV Identification and Linkage Consortium provides innovative youth-focused HIV, STD and Hepatitis C prevention and outreach through a variety of youth-friendly educational and community opportunities. During 2020, the program pivoted due to COVID-19 and expanded its capacity to deliver prevention education, access to biomedical interventions and routine screening services. Project staff used their provider platforms to inform the community about COVID-19 testing sites and continued to engage youth throughout the pandemic. They distributed more than 200 prevention educational kits at bus stops in the Greater Hartford area, and they reached more than 2,500 people through Facebook Live with information in English and Spanish on HIV prevention services. The program also provided adolescent reproductive health services education information to nearly 40 people enrolled in a summer youth employment services program.
- The COVID-19 pandemic called for new ways in which the **Help Me Grow National Center** must support its National Affiliate Network, comprised of over 100 Help Me Grow systems across 31 states. The HMG National Center prioritized the dissemination of innovative and promising practices utilized by affiliates to leverage their established Help Me Grow infrastructure to mobilize an efficient response to the crisis. The HMG National Center also pivoted its annual in-person forum to a successful virtual format.
- As part of our **Person-Centered Medical Home** program, the National Committee for Quality Assurance recertified Connecticut Children's Primary Care East and West locations as Person-Centered Medical Homes in April 2020. In addition, the sites implemented telehealth in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In October 2020, the National Health Services Corps recertified the Primary Care East location as a recognized site providing care in an underserved area. Primary Care East is located in East Hartford. Primary Care West relocated to Farmington from West Hartford in June 2020.
- The **Practice Quality Improvement** program reimagined its grant-funded work supported by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Instead of holding an in-person training event for parents and caregivers on the protective factors, the program pivoted to donate 130 My Family is Strong! Community Care Bags to Hartford residents in order to meet direct pandemic-related needs. The bags included a \$100 Visa gift card, hand sanitizer, and helpful information for managing stress and building resilience during the pandemic.
- Our **Resident Education in Advocacy and Community Health** program received an \$8,000 grant from the Children's Fund of Connecticut to further the work of pediatric residents in the community. In addition, one of its residents, Nancy Presnick, DO, was accepted into the American Academy of Pediatrics Federal Advocacy Internship, which is a first for the residency program. Dr. Presnick learned about child health policy, the legislative process, federal advocacy and public affairs as part of the program. In addition, Amritha Patel, MD, won the Capitol Area Health Consortium community service award, which marks the third year in a row the award has gone to a REACH resident.
- Throughout COVID-19, the **Kohl's Start Childhood Off Right** (SCOR) program continued to engage virtually with community partners in the Hartford Childhood Wellness Alliance. SCOR also pivoted to host virtual community wellness events, including prenatal yoga classes in collaboration with the Stronger Families, Stronger Futures program; Zumbini with Mr. Rey on its Facebook page; and grab-and-go health promotion activities offered in collaboration with the Hartford Public Library. SCOR has continued to distribute toolkits and feeding guidelines to pediatric practices in Hartford. The program has also participated in Connecticut Children's sponsored activities such as a Facebook Live healthy eating event, an Ask the Experts presentation for pediatric child health providers, and authoring several articles for Connecticut Children's Growing Healthy Blog.





PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING IN FUTURE YEARS

Children's hospitals play a tremendous role in shaping the lives of children by addressing their medical, developmental and social/emotional needs to set them up for success throughout their lives. Connecticut Children's is proud to celebrate 25 years of service to children and families. To ensure optimal impact in promoting health, development and well-being as we move forward in creating the future for children for the next 25 years and beyond, Connecticut Children's launched the Center for Well-being and Care Integration.

The Center for Well-being and Care Integration focuses on improving population health and incorporates Connecticut Children's mental and behavioral health services, Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health, and Connecticut Children's Care Network under one umbrella to ensure a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of children and families. The Center is developing a strategy to reduce disease prevalence and improve health and well-being outcomes for prioritized populations. By analyzing healthcare data and trends, the Center will identify populations of children experiencing health disparities, such as obesity and asthma, and generate solutions to improve treatment and care for those populations. The Center will also focus on strengthening collaboration between community-oriented programs and activities offered by Connecticut Children's to ensure maximum impact in addressing the medical, developmental and social/emotional needs of families. In addition, the Center will work to raise awareness among Connecticut Children's team members and the communities we serve about the importance of addressing the medical and non-medical needs of families through value-based care and how community-oriented programs and interventions can be utilized to improve health outcomes.

As we continue our work in promoting children's health, development and well-being, we are honored to have so many child advocates as partners in this work. Without such collaboration at the local, state and national levels, our pioneering clinical and community-focused approach would not be possible. We are excited about our role in empowering children and families to be the best they can be, and creating healthier futures for all.

For more information about Connecticut Children's, connect with us here:

Website: www.connecticutchildrens.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ConnecticutChildrens/>

Twitter: [@ctchildrens](https://twitter.com/ctchildrens)

Blog: www.connecticutchildrens.org/blog

Connect with Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health:

Website: www.connecticutchildrens.org/community-child-health/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ConnecticutChildrensCommunityHealth/>

Twitter: [@advancingkids](https://twitter.com/advancingkids)

Blog: www.advancingkids.org

Connecticut Children's Foundation

Website: <https://connecticutchildrensfoundation.org/>

Connecticut Children's is the only hospital in Connecticut dedicated exclusively to the care of children and ranked one of the best children's hospitals in the nation by U.S. News & World Report and a Magnet® designated hospital. Connecticut Children's provides more than 30 pediatric specialties along with community-based programs to uniquely care for the physical, social, and emotional needs of children. Our team of pediatric experts and care coordinators bring access to breakthrough research, advanced treatments for both rare and common diseases, and innovative health and safety programs to every child. Connecticut Children's is a not-for-profit organization with a mission to improve access to healthcare for all children through convenient locations, care alliances and partnerships.

