



# CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY BENEFIT REPORT

Promoting Children's Health, Development and Well-being

*Published: October 2020. Financial Information and Program Quick Facts from 2019.*





Dear Connecticut Children's Colleagues, Partners and Supporters,

At Connecticut Children's, we have long embraced the opportunity to strengthen families so they can best support their children's health, development and well-being. We strive to provide quality clinical care, while also addressing the disparities that exist in healthcare and other child-serving sectors to ensure successful long-term outcomes for all children. We have committed to viewing our work through the lens of social justice, inclusion, and diversity. We are mindful now, more than ever, of the critical importance of our community-focused work, as we work as an organization, community, state and country to navigate the challenges presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic and respond with action to important calls for social change.

In addition to the state-of-the-art medical and surgical care that our clinicians provide, Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health (the Office) leads our community-focused efforts. The Office is a nationally recognized model for supporting families in addressing the diverse issues that affect the health and well-being of children. Office programs work to enhance protective factors in families so they are better able to handle life's challenges. The programs also address the social determinants of health, which are the circumstances in which people live and work that can adversely affect health and development, especially among children and families in economically challenged communities.

We are excited to share highlights of our work in this Community Benefit Report. The report includes a look at how Connecticut Children's clinicians and programs shifted to address the pandemic-related needs of children and families, as well as steps taken by our programs to address needs identified in our latest Community Health Needs Assessment. It also includes financial information and quick facts from our community programs from 2019, the last full year prior to publication.

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

Sincerely,

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SUPPORTING  
CHILDREN AND  
FAMILIES FACING  
UNPRECEDENTED  
CHALLENGES



## SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FACING UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGES

Our commitment to strengthening families and communities to promote children's optimal health, development and well-being is of critical importance now more than ever. We find ourselves at a significant crossroads as we embrace the nationwide movement calling on organizations and communities to address longstanding issues of racial and social injustice, and as we fight the global COVID-19 pandemic, which is causing significant loss of life, long-term health concerns and additional hardships for people across the country and disproportionately affecting people of color. In response to both, Connecticut Children's leadership, clinicians and community programs shifted their day-to-day focus to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as to meet the critical needs of children and families in innovative ways during this unprecedented time. Here is a closer look at this work:

### Promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Connecticut Children's renewed its commitment to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion to ensure a welcoming and inclusive culture in all areas of the organization. Under the leadership of Connecticut Children's Senior Vice President for Human Resources Larry Milan, the organization developed and launched a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Framework during the summer of 2020 to reach team members, patients and their families, vendors and contractors, and residents of the communities Connecticut Children's serves.

Under the Framework, Connecticut Children's will ensure that all values, behaviors, actions, systems and processes are looked at through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. This will include hiring practices, performance reviews, continuous quality improvement as well as all other areas of the organization. Key pillars of the Framework include:

- **Adopting best practices from current initiatives:** Many Connecticut Children's departments have started their own efforts and dialogues to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in the work environment. These efforts will inform future organization-wide approaches. For example, Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health launched a Pathways to Action initiative that includes town hall discussions with team members and a smaller work group. The work group is charged with identifying priority themes based on team member suggestions and recommending specific action steps for implementation.
- **Encouraging regular dialogue:** Connecticut Children's plans to infuse authentic conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion across the organization to ensure team members remain committed to making progress in these areas. The organization will launch forums and panel discussions, in addition to virtual brown bag lunches with executive leadership, virtual lounges, and the "Ears for Peers" program that already exist to provide team members with an avenue to share ideas and seek support.
- **Diversity audit:** Connecticut Children's will conduct an organization-wide diversity audit to seek input from team members through focus groups, interviews and surveys. The data collected will help leaders identify themes, assess priorities and make recommendations to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion in the organization.
- **Education, awareness and learning:** Connecticut Children's will leverage e-learning platforms and team meetings as places where team members can access information and increase awareness about diversity, equity and inclusion. In addition, the organization will continue to update resources currently provided to team members through its internal website.

### Pivoting to Address Pandemic Needs

Key elements of our shift to address the pandemic needs of children and families include:

- **Video visits:** Connecticut Children's shifted traditional in-person office visits to video visits for our 30 subspecialties. Clinicians performed more than 25,000 video visits during the first four months of the pandemic, ensuring continued access to quality medical care for our patients. Video visits remain an option for patients even after in-person appointments resumed.
- **Drive-thru COVID-19 testing:** To ensure a safe and sound experience for team members and patients receiving in-person medical or surgical care, Connecticut Children's launched drive-thru COVID-19 testing for team members and patients. The tests are available to team members who are exposed to someone infected with COVID-19 or who exhibit possible symptoms of the virus, as well as those who work closely with our most vulnerable patients. The tests are also available to all patients admitted for surgical procedures, as well as high-risk patients seeing clinicians for outpatient appointments. In addition, testing is available to medical residents with rotations at medical facilities outside of Connecticut Children's.
- **COVID-19 hotline:** Connecticut Children's launched a hotline for community providers and parents to access pediatric experts with questions related to COVID-19. Clinicians staff the hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week to provide up-to-date information for callers.
- **COVID-19 resources for community providers:** Connecticut Children's Infectious Diseases experts host weekly Ask the Experts webinars for community providers to ensure they have access to current information regarding the pandemic. In addition, Connecticut Children's distributes weekly COVID-19 emails to providers and added special provider-focused materials to its website.
- **COVID-19 resources for families:** Connecticut Children's clinical providers, injury prevention advocates, and teachers teamed up to author more than 40 pandemic-related articles for the Connecticut Children's blog to provide guidance for parents and caregivers, including the following:
  - School Closure and Back to School Tool Kits
  - Series on building resilience in children
  - Advice on how best to self-quarantine
  - Tips to keep children engaged in distance learning
  - Precautions to keep children safe during the extended time at home
  - Ways to celebrate birthdays and graduations
- **COVID-19 resources for team members:** Connecticut Children's leadership host weekly virtual Town Hall meetings and distribute email updates to provide team members with the latest information related to COVID-19. Connecticut Children's also provides updated information and resources for team members on its internal website.
- **COVID-19-related research:** Connecticut Children's clinicians have been actively involved in research related to the pandemic and have published a number of studies. Topics include the clinical course of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, the safe handling of expressed breast milk, the impact of COVID-19 on pediatric gastroenterology fellow training, domestic violence and the safe storage of firearms, critical care in the time of COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19 on global disparities in surgical training in pediatric otolaryngology, as well as other publications.



- **Community care bags:** Connecticut Children's Practice Quality Improvement Program donated 130 My Family is Strong! Community Care Bags to Hartford residents. The bags included a \$100 Visa gift card, hand sanitizer, and helpful information for managing stress and building resilience during the pandemic. Hartford Food & Nutrition Services employees, members of the New Dimensions Christian Center, and other organizations received the care bags. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving supported the project with funding initially designated for an in-person training session for parents and community providers, which was cancelled due to the pandemic.
- **Basic needs survey:** The Help Me Grow National Center conducted a survey of its affiliates around the country to determine the needs for which families most frequently sought support during the early part of the pandemic. Affiliates reported families' most pressing needs to be:
  - Formula, food, diapers and wipes
  - Childcare for essential workers
  - Perinatal and postpartum mental health supports and services
 Affiliates utilized this information to respond to inquiries from families and quickly connect them to available resources to meet their needs.
- **Virtual support groups:** The Hartford Youth HIV Identification and Linkage Consortium switched from holding in-person to virtual support groups for adolescents who either are at risk for or diagnosed with HIV. They also began mailing out HIV test kits for adolescents to utilize at home, with approval from the Connecticut Department of Public Health.
- **Virtual training for pediatric practices:** 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 support 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. Educating Practices is a signature innovation of the Child Health and Development Institute that is supported by Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health.
- **Virtual learning for pediatric residents:** Pediatric residents participating in the Resident Education in Advocacy and Community Health pathway moved to a virtual curriculum, which increased resident engagement in the pathway. Pediatric residents also worked with Connecticut Children's Government Relations team to ensure private insurers and Medicaid reimburse pediatric providers for video visits in Connecticut. They also created a reference summary for private insurance and Medicaid telehealth reimbursement policies for each state.
- **Virtual obesity prevention outreach:** The Kohl's Start Childhood Off Right program shifted from holding in-person community wellness events to hosting them online or through social media, which allowed the program to stay connected with children and families and provide appropriate resources.
- **Supporting COVID-19 innovations:** Childhood Prosperity Lab shifted to provide technical assistance, coaching and other support to changemakers who develop innovations in response to the pandemic.
- **Scaling social impact:** The Help Me Grow National Center received funding from The J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation to engage Spring Impact, a global consulting group dedicated to scaling social impact. The project focuses on developing and implementing a strategy to identify, systematize, and disseminate select child- and family-serving pandemic-related innovations to the Help Me Grow National Affiliate Network. In addition, Childhood Prosperity Lab is working with Spring Impact to support the dissemination of these innovations.





# HOW DO WE DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY BENEFIT?

At Connecticut Children's, our community-focused initiatives 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 and work. 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 services. 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 childhood obesity, and improving housing conditions. Our commitment to embracing a broader definition of community benefit, beyond what is required, is central to our approach in promoting children's optimal health, development and well-being.

**Our Total Community Benefit in FY2019:**

**\$97.5  
million**



## OUR COMMUNITY BENEFIT BY CATEGORY

**\$66.29  
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.

**\$20.47  
million**

Education for Health Professionals

Connecticut Children's serves as the primary pediatric teaching hospital for the UCONN School of Medicine and has 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.

**\$6.50  
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. Expenses in this category reflect costs related to maintaining our research infrastructure.

**\$4.28  
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**

Housing and Community Factors

Childhood Obesity Prevention

School Readiness

Mental Health, Behavioral Health  
and Injury Prevention



## HOUSING AND COMMUNITY FACTORS

### Making Children Healthier One House at a Time

Fredrik is a happy, healthy and vibrant preschooler. He loves music, he is obsessed with soccer and football, and he always has a smile on his face. His parents, Josh and Marie Pinheiro, are thankful that he has come a long way from the challenges he faced in his earliest years.

“With everything he’s been through, he’s always had a smile on his face,” says Marie. “It amazes me how tough he is.”

#### Early Challenges

Fred was two months old when he started struggling to keep his food down. Two months later, the wheezing and coughing started. At an age when he should have steadily put on weight, he barely gained a few ounces per week. Over the next year, his parents sought advice from Fred’s pediatrician as well as specialists. Physicians diagnosed Fred with failure to thrive and acid reflux. They also discovered that his formula seeped into his airways. Fred started reflux medication. His parents increased his calorie count, added thickener to his liquids, and took precautions to help him eat without aspirating. They brought him to Connecticut Children’s three times and admitted him for testing. Nothing conclusive turned up.

Fred continued to struggle and on a February day when he was 13 months old, he had trouble breathing and turned blue at his daycare. Paramedics rushed him to Connecticut Children’s. Physicians stabilized Fred and admitted him for further care. During the hospital stay, the family received another diagnosis: asthma.

Fred’s parents describe his asthma diagnosis as a breath of fresh air. Under the care of Connecticut Children’s, they started Fred on daily medication, including a twice-daily inhaler. When he gets sick, he also uses a nebulizer mask three or four times a day and has physical therapy on his chest. In addition to adjusting to Fred’s treatments, his parents also had to learn about asthma triggers and other potential health hazards and make major changes to their home to remove them.

#### Help from Healthy Homes Program

Connecticut Children’s connects families with a vast network of partner programs, both medical and non-medical, to set children up to thrive. One of these programs, Connecticut Children’s Healthy Homes Program, raises awareness about the critical link between housing quality and health. As part of its work, the program helps families identify and resolve health hazards in their homes.

Healthy Homes visited the Pinheiros’ house and identified two health hazards. First, a leak in the basement, which could cause mold and moisture problems that might exacerbate Fred’s asthma. Second, they discovered lead paint in the home’s exterior, garage floor and shed, which could cause developmental delays, learning difficulties and additional health concerns.

Healthy Homes removed the lead paint from the Pinheiros’ house — replacing the front and back doors, scraping and repainting the exterior, and repainting the shed and garage floor — and installed a drainage system to keep water out of the basement.



Over the past 17 years, Healthy Homes has secured more than \$34 million in federal funding and \$29 million in matching grants from community partners and state agencies. The funding enabled the program to make more than 3,000 homes lead safe and healthy, protecting more than 1,800 children under the age of 6. The program has also educated more than 38,000 people about the dangers of lead poisoning.

“To realize you have a dangerous issue in your house that you have to fix, and then to have somebody say, ‘We can fix it for you,’ is really shocking — and at the same time, a relief,” says Josh.

Since the renovations wrapped up at Fred’s home, the basement has been water-free and there is improved air quality throughout the house. Most importantly, Fred is now thriving.



## CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION

### Staying Active and Healthy with Community Wellness Programs

The research is clear. Healthy nutrition and physical activity improve long-term health and well-being for children and their families. In addition, habits that start early in life are more likely to become long-term lifestyle choices.

That is why the Kohl's Start Childhood Off Right (SCOR) program, which is part of Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health, encourages infants, toddlers and preschoolers to enjoy healthy foods and stay active through monthly wellness events and community gardening. SCOR is dedicated to preventing childhood obesity and focuses its educational outreach efforts on children ages 0 to 5.

#### Moving and Grooving with Zumbini

Zumbini is among the most popular wellness events sponsored by SCOR. Inspired by the popularity of Zumba, Zumbini aims to get infants and toddlers singing, dancing and playing with other children, while also providing an opportunity for them to bond with their caregivers.

During a recent Zumbini class sponsored by SCOR at the Southside Family Center in Hartford, Christina Smith and her daughter Laniece were among those who danced to the music, swayed scarves and tapped on small drums.

"My daughter likes to be out and enjoying fun with other kids, so I bring her to all sorts of children's activities," says Christina. "That's the only way she gets out to be with kids because she stays home with me all the time. It's very important to me because I'm a diabetic so I try to make sure she stays on the right track, giving her fruits and vegetables and keeping her moving."

During breaks in the action, the families enjoyed water infused with frozen strawberries as an example of an easy-to-make healthy beverage that caregivers can serve at home.

Guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services encourage pre-school age children to be physically active throughout the day to enhance growth and development. They also encourage children and adolescents ages 6-17 years old to engage in one hour or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day.

For younger children, aerobic classes such as Zumbini provide a great way to build interest in physical activity and get them moving, sometimes without them even realizing they are exercising.

"The purpose behind Zumbini and the other wellness events that SCOR offers is to help teach parents how to interact with their children and what kind of activities they can do," says Nancy Trout, MD, MPH, co-director of the Kohl's Start Childhood Off Right program. "This can be as simple as putting on music and dancing while at home."

In addition to Zumbini, SCOR also offers other wellness events for children and families in Hartford. Those events include Hip Hop for Health, Baby and Me Yoga, Hula Hooping, and Music and Movement. SCOR also sponsors a prenatal yoga class.

#### Community Gardens

The benefits of teaching children to grow their own food from a young age are well known, which is why SCOR collaborated with several community partners to build and plant raised garden beds at family and community centers around Hartford.

Children, families, and team members care for the beds, which promotes outdoor physical activity and the exploration of nature. In addition, SCOR hosts harvesting and cooking events for families and team members at the centers to celebrate their garden work, as well as to engage children in preparing healthy food and tasting fresh produce.

"Through this community garden project, our hope is for parents to see how easy it is to grow fresh fruits and vegetables, how much better they taste than packaged foods, and how much healthier they are," says Dr. Trout.

SCOR plans to continue the project in future summers as part of its outreach efforts to provide nutrition education to children and families and empower them to grow and stay healthy.





## SCHOOL READINESS

### Bringing Imagination Library to Hartford

Children who read at grade level by 3rd grade are better positioned for success throughout their lives compared to those whose literacy skills are less developed. Many factors contribute to early childhood literacy including access to books in the home.

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 at least 60 books by the time the child enters kindergarten. Today, local chapters of Imagination Library exist across the United States and in several other countries.

Connecticut Children's President and CEO James E. Shmerling, DHA, FACHE, led an effort to establish an Imagination Library chapter in Hartford, which began enrolling families during the summer of 2020. Dr. Shmerling has a passion for literacy. He worked with Dolly Parton to spread the program across Tennessee while previously working at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital. In late 2018, Connecticut Children's began to build a coalition of local leaders to raise funds that would form the foundation for the local program. That coalition resulted in a funding partnership that includes Connecticut Children's, Hartford Hospital, Trinity Health of New England and The United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut. Each partner has committed to a two-year, \$25,000 per year contribution. United Way will provide logistical support for Imagination Library including the enrollment of families, the maintenance of address lists, and the collaborative promotion of the program with partners who already connect with Hartford children.

The partners would like to see 2,215 Hartford families enroll in the first year, which is 27% of those with children ages 0-5. Connecticut Children's hopes that the foundation of support provided by the partners will influence other partners to join the coalition, which would enable further expansion of the program to families from a broader geographic area over the next few years.



## MENTAL HEALTH, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & INJURY PREVENTION

### Improving Outcomes Through Training and Education

Connecticut Children's recognizes that mental health and behavioral health concerns are among the most significant needs that children face, and they too often go unaddressed. In addition, preventing injuries is critical to enhancing child outcomes. Connecticut Children's offers numerous programs to enhance the emotional well-being of children and prevent injuries, including the work detailed below.

#### **Suicide Prevention Training:**

Key among its strategies to keep children injury-free, Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center (IPC) focuses on promoting children's mental health. The early detection of problems is key but only about 20% of children connect to the help they need when they feel sad or depressed. Undetected, some children contemplate taking their own life. The IPC recently collaborated with the Boys & Girls Club of Hartford to bring Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR) training to 26 adult team members. Steven Rogers, MD, and IPC Interim Director Kevin Borrup, DrPH, JD, MPA, facilitated the training, which makes participants aware of the signs of suicide and provides them with the tools they need to respond by directly asking about suicide. As a result, the Boys & Girls Club team is now better prepared to identify and respond to mental health concerns.

#### **Training State Workers to Address Pandemic-Related Injury and Violence:**

In collaboration with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, IPC team members created and delivered trainings for the Department of Children and Families (DCF) on the impact of intimate partner violence (IPV), with a special focus on challenges related to COVID-19. These trainings incorporated new findings on increases in the frequency and severity of IPV, including the unique ways that IPV manifests itself in the context of the pandemic, and provided strategies for DCF workers to safely assess for IPV in a virtual environment. Given the decline in calls to DCF associated with the school closings, equipping this workforce with the tools to communicate effectively with families is critical.

#### **Training Future Healthcare Leaders:**

The Hayley Petit Injury & Violence Prevention Fellowship, supported by the Petit Family Foundation, shifted to a virtual training opportunity when the pandemic hit. During the six-week program, participants got an in-depth look at the field of injury prevention through lectures, job shadowing, and participation in a research project. The fellowship began six years ago as a summer program and expanded year-round in 2019. To date, 27 female college students have participated.

"Together, they gave us a comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding health inequity, domestic violence, child maltreatment, safety and suicide. Furthermore, we were able to network with these professionals and understand how public health is a collaborative, community effort," said Natalie Fulco, who participated in the program while studying at Fairfield University. Fulco's comments appear in a Stewardship Report published by Connecticut Children's Foundation.

#### **Youth Violence Intervention and Prevention Workgroup:**

Connecticut Children's treats a half-dozen youth each year with gunshot injuries and many more who suffer injuries from assaults. The children, adolescents, and their families have needs that go beyond medical care and their short hospital stay. Connecticut Children's collaborates with the city of Hartford and community-based agencies through a Youth Violence Intervention and Prevention Workgroup to ensure that children and families connect to appropriate services and supports in their communities. After every trauma activation related to a gun injury or other violent assault, the Connecticut Children's team works to connect children and their families to Hartford's youth specialist who coordinates a response.







**A CLOSER LOOK**

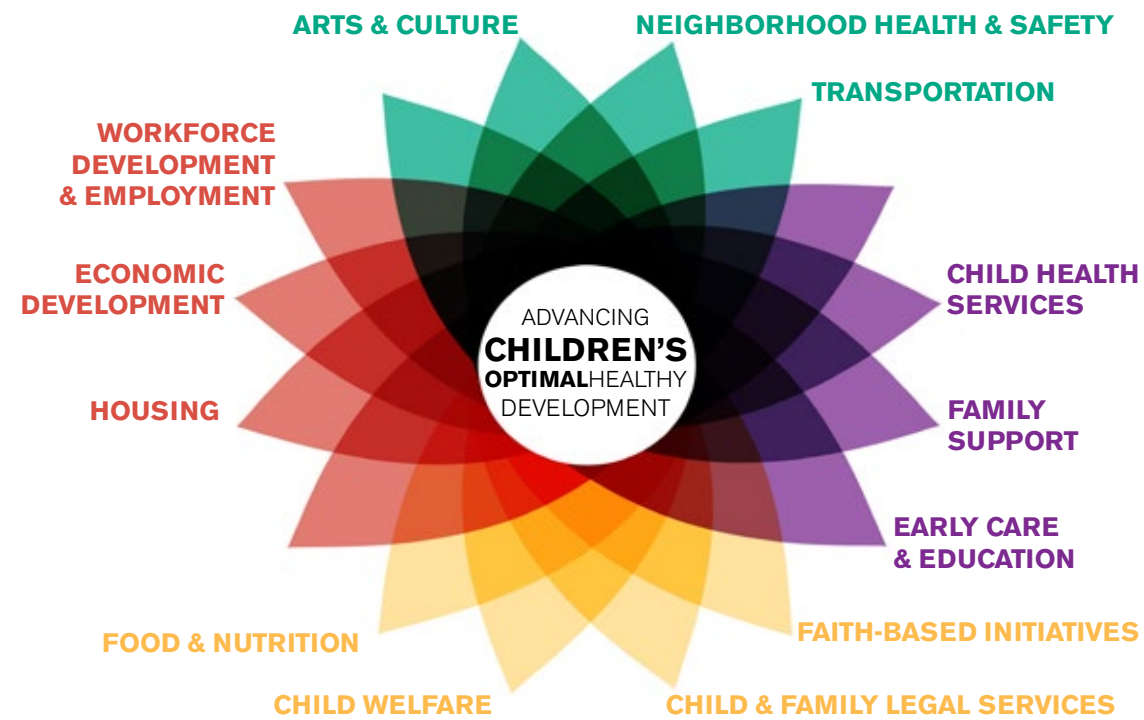
# CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S OFFICE FOR COMMUNITY CHILD HEALTH

**A Nationally Recognized Model  
for Addressing Identified  
Community Needs**



## A CLOSER LOOK AT CONNECTICUT CHILDREN'S OFFICE FOR COMMUNITY CHILD HEALTH

Connecticut Children's is a national leader in supporting families and communities to promote the health, development, and well-being of all children, and places a particular focus on serving vulnerable children 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 and development; 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	●		●	●		
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/](https://connecticutchildrens.org/community-child-health/)







**A CLOSER LOOK**

# SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE



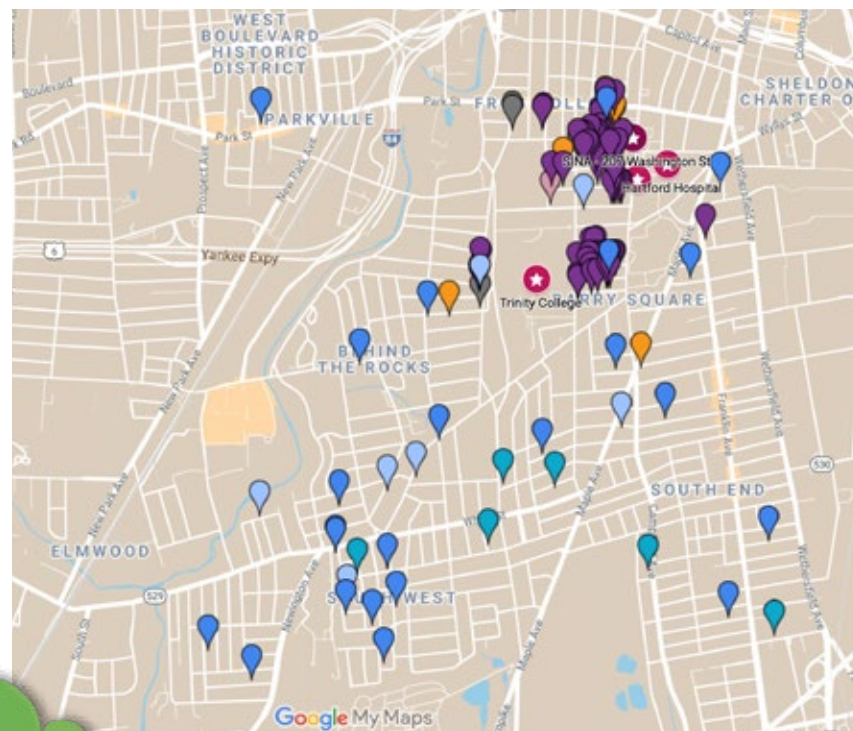


## A CLOSER LOOK AT SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) is dedicated to improving community health and economic vitality in Hartford's southern neighborhoods to enhance the quality of life for those who live, work, play, study and do business there. SINA, a partnership between Connecticut Children's, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College, promotes homeownership and community engagement, connects neighborhood residents to employment opportunities, and creates partnerships that make streets cleaner and safer with the goal of transforming the neighborhoods that surround its member institutions.

SINA continued its work rehabilitating distressed or blighted properties, which includes home renovations and new construction projects. In 2019, SINA began construction on 11 new housing units that will house 46 people, bringing the total number of properties the organization has built to more than 85. To date, SINA property renovations have added more than \$500,000 in property tax revenue to the city annually. SINA continues to maintain and operate 82 rental units for low-income residents, with less than a 1% vacancy rate in 2019.

To further educational opportunities for youth, SINA awarded 14 scholarships to students from Hartford in 2019, bringing the total scholarships awarded by the organization to more than \$240,000 since 1997. In addition, SINA hosted two neighborhood cleanups with nearly 150 volunteers, collecting 164 bags of trash and filling 70 bags with recycled materials. SINA helped 14 neighborhood residents find employment at the three SINA partner organizations. In addition, SINA helped an additional 11 residents attain jobs with other employers. SINA's Homeownership Incentive Program (HIP) helped three team members of the partner institutions become homeowners in the SINA neighborhood by providing a down payment on their properties, for a total of 34 HIP purchases since the initiative began in 2013.



**This map highlights the properties owned or renovated by SINA, as well as those purchased through the Homeownership Incentive Program.**

- SINA Institutions 
- SINA Properties 
- Homes Under Construction 
- Cityscape Homes 
- Homeownership Incentive Program 



### Neighborhood Cleanups

- Sponsored **2** cleanups
- **150** participants
- **164** bags of trash collected
- **70** bags of recyclables collected



### Advancing Education

- Awarded **14** scholarships
- Total scholarship \$ since 1997: **\$240,000**



### Rehabilitating Blighted Properties

- Began construction on **11** new housing units
- Total properties built: more than **85**
- Added tax revenue: more than **\$500,000** per year





# PROMOTING CHILD WELL-BEING

## PROMOTING CHILD WELL-BEING

### Unlimited Adventures on the Slopes

For many children who live in New England, skiing is a part of winter. However, for some children with special needs, the sport is a challenging one that their families often avoid.

Melissa Yager of Brookfield, Connecticut was reluctant to have her son Ryan try the sport until she found the Skiers Unlimited program offered by Connecticut Children's. Ryan, age 8, has Down syndrome. "I was hesitant but I said, 'Let's do it. Let's try it!' and he absolutely loves it," says Melissa. "He's a happy, healthy boy who loves trying new activities. Skiing came very naturally to him."

The Yager family travels about 40 minutes to get to Mount Southington, where the program runs every Friday afternoon during January and February. "There aren't too many adaptive sports where we are from in the greater Danbury area," says Melissa. "We usually have to travel anywhere from 40 minutes to an hour to participate in activities such as these, but it is well worth it."

Connecticut Children's has offered the Skiers Unlimited program for close to 40 years. In a typical winter, about 25 children participate in the program. In addition, siblings and parents are also encouraged to ski.

"Skiers Unlimited is impressive in terms of promoting children's health, development and well-being because it teaches children and their families to be active and enjoy the outdoors, when they might otherwise not have had such an opportunity," said Paul H. Dworkin, MD, executive vice president for community child health at Connecticut Children's. "We hope they continue with their love of skiing long after they are finished participating in the program and that they also go on to further embrace physical activity by trying additional sports."

Mount Southington welcomes the Skiers Unlimited program every year at no charge to the families or organizers. As many as 60 volunteers work with the skiers every year, including some from Connecticut Children's and others from Quinnipiac University who are studying to go into the healthcare field.

The children who participate in the program have a variety of health or developmental challenges, including autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and spina bifida.

Ryan looks forward to the ski program at Mount Southington every week. He loves to return home and tell his teachers and friends at school all about his adventures. "They know he goes there every week so they're always asking him questions about skiing," says Melissa. "It gives him something to talk about, which helps his communication skills as well."

Ryan's family hopes to return for more fun on the slopes in future seasons.

"He can do everything every other kid can do. It just takes a little longer for him to get there," says Melissa. "It's wonderful to see how confident he is out there on the slopes."

"If you have a child with disabilities, I would just treat them like any other child in terms of these sports activities. Just try it out, because you never know what is going to happen. He's completely surprised me and we're very grateful that a program like this exists," says Melissa.





## COMMUNITY PROGRAM QUICK FACTS FROM 2019:

- The **Care Coordination Collaborative Model**, developed by Connecticut Children's Center for Care Coordination, seeks to increase the capacity of care coordinators across sectors to serve children while decreasing service duplication. The North Central Regional Care Coordination Collaborative, which is one of five regional collaboratives utilizing the model, has focused on collaboration and partnership with the Regional Network of Care (led by Beacon Health and focused on mental health and basic needs) this past year. The Collaborative is looking to re-engage team members in remote quarterly meetings with a focus on community recovery and COVID-19 impact on the social determinants of health.
- The **Center for Care Coordination** received 1,896 referrals for care coordination in 2019. The majority of those referrals came from its work in behavioral health providing clinical care coordination to families from the Emergency Department and the Behavioral Health Transitions Clinic. In 2019, in an effort to strengthen Connecticut Children's continuum of care, the Center brought clinical social work and nurse case management under its team. Bringing these three disciplines of support together allows families to receive continuous care and coordination from an inpatient hospital stay to their return home. This partnership will work to increase adherence to care plans and improve communication across clinical pathways.
- **Childhood Prosperity Lab** supports the development and growth of novel strategies that help all children flourish, thrive, and succeed. The Lab works with organizations in sectors known to impact the healthy development of children, including housing, early childhood and other areas. In doing this, the Lab provides coaching, technical assistance and other support to organizations as they pursue their desired level of impact and help all children prosper.
- **Children's Center on Family Violence** continued to assess its collective approach to understanding and responding to children impacted by family violence through a series of planning sessions. This effort incorporated guidance from in-state and national domestic violence leaders to identify new strategies aimed at enhancing views of clinical and advocacy supports for young people and their families.
- **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 also provide enhanced data on users, which allowed the program to determine that adoption of the tools by region is increasing over time. In a 4-month period, page views exceeded 1,000 and the top three most viewed tools were autism, migraines, and elevated thyroid-stimulating hormone. All of the co-management plans and related tools are located on the Connecticut Children's website.
- **Easy Breathing** secured its second year of funding from the Cigna Foundation to digitally integrate the asthma management program for pediatric providers across electronic health records and school information systems. With this funding, the Asthma Center launched a pilot project to determine the feasibility and acceptability of clinicians using the tablet-based program to diagnose and treat children with asthma in a federally qualified health center. In addition, the Asthma Center published results of its evaluation into whether school nurses can assist pediatricians in providing asthma care and reduce school absenteeism through Easy Breathing for Schools. Researchers demonstrated that successful implementation of Easy Breathing for Schools significantly decreased school absenteeism and improved inhaler technique among a sample of 251 students with physician-confirmed asthma over two school years.



- **Educating Practices**, which is a signature innovation of the Child Health and Development Institute that is supported by Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health, trained community-based child health providers to review and interpret newborn screening tests performed on every baby born in Connecticut, and to discuss results with parents. In addition, its training in behavioral health screening resulted in 27 new pediatric primary care sites in one primary care network screening children for mental health conditions. Its trainings in screening for developmental delays and maternal depression contributed to increased screens at pediatric primary care sites in Connecticut, which totaled more than 73,000 children younger than three and almost 40,000 mothers for those conditions.
- **Hartford Youth HIV Identification and Linkage Consortium** continued its outreach work to educate youth about sexually transmitted infections and expanded its model to provide housing services for youth. The program increased routine screenings for HIV and increased the dissemination of information regarding the availability of pre-exposure prophylaxis. It reached more than 3,400 students and youth with prevention messaging related to sexually transmitted infections.
- **Connecticut Children's Healthy Homes Program** experienced a record-breaking year in 2019. The program received the most applications (235) from the largest number of unique towns (40), and signed the highest total dollar amount of contracts (\$2.7M) in its 17-year history. Through cross-sector referral initiatives like Building for Health and the Asthma Care Transformation Initiative, the program opened referral pathways with new partners, including SINA, Putting on AIRS, and clinicians across the Connecticut Children's Care Network.
- **The Help Me Grow (HMG) National Center** expanded its National Affiliate Network to 104 systems serving families in 30 states and Washington, D.C., including adding systems in three new states. Across the country, HMG systems served 112,077 children and families, providing information and connections to community-based supports. In addition, the HMG National Center hosted the 10th Annual HMG Forum in Buffalo, New York, which saw record attendance from affiliates, community providers, physicians, funders and early childhood partners from more than 30 states. Also, the HMG National Center engaged the FrameWorks Institute to provide training and consultation to a Community of Practice comprised of 13 HMG affiliates to develop a shared approach to messaging, as well as strengthen understanding among families, community partners, and providers about how to best utilize HMG systems.
- A hallmark activity of the **Injury Prevention Center** is its ability to reach out into communities with several safety programs. The Watch for Me CT pedestrian and bicyclist safety program reached residents across the state with educational campaign messaging, social media engagements, and in-person and virtual outreach efforts, including connecting with more than 5,000 people in a single day at a Yard Goats game. Safe Kids Connecticut provided direct education to more than 1,000 parents across the state through its coalition partners, ensuring that caregivers appropriately buckled children in child safety seats. Finally, the IPC's sexual violence prevention program was active in several schools across the state, directly reaching more than 400 students.
- The **Person-Centered Medical Home (PCMH)** program attained Patient Centered Medical Home recognition from the National Committee on Quality Assurance for Connecticut Children's Primary Care East and West locations. The two sites serve about 5,500 patients annually. In addition, the program successfully completed its Two Generations behavioral health integration project at both locations, which is in partnership with the Village for Families and Children and funded by the United Health Foundation.
- Connecticut Children's **Practice Quality Improvement (PQI) Program** provided trainings attended by more than 100 Hartford families and providers on enhancing protective factors so families are better able to handle life's challenges. In addition, PQI led the Impact Accelerator Network (IAN) in partnership with Connecticut Children's Healthy Homes Program. The IAN established a cross-sector collaborative between six Hartford community-based organizations to improve communication and refine the referral process between organizations to better serve families in North Hartford. During the five-month collaborative, participants developed a referral tool, which their organizations are now utilizing.
- Pediatric residents involved in the **Resident Education in Advocacy and Community Health (REACH)** program spent about 200 hours working with children and youth at various partner organizations in Hartford. REACH received an \$8,000 grant from the Children's Fund of Connecticut to further the work of residents in the community. In addition, Noah Buncher, DO received the Capitol Area Health Consortium's Community Service Award for his work with REACH.
- The **Start Childhood Off Right** program reached 785 families, 106 pediatric primary care providers, and 75 community outreach workers with healthy eating and active living messages tailored to families with young children.







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

Children's hospitals play an important role in shaping the lives of children in their earliest years, throughout adolescence, and into adulthood. We know from an abundance of research that the earlier health and developmental concerns are identified and addressed, the better off children will be in both the short-term and throughout their lives. At Connecticut Children's, our medical care, surgical care, and community supports collectively ensure better outcomes for children and families, and serve as a foundation to build strong and sustainable communities.

We plan to enhance our clinical and community focus by strengthening our commitment to address issues of racial and social justice, including working toward eliminating disparities that exist in the healthcare sector. We also plan to ensure families have access to high quality clinical care closer to home through our expanding physician network. In addition, we offer enhanced behavioral health and care coordination services to provide families with the care they need in and out of the hospital setting. We are also committed to using technology to improve families' access to information and care, such as telehealth services.

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.

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

**Website:** [www.connecticutchildrens.org](http://www.connecticutchildrens.org)

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

**Twitter:** @ctchildrens

**Blog:** [www.connecticutchildrens.org/blog](http://www.connecticutchildrens.org/blog)

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

**Website:** [www.connecticutchildrens.org/community-child-health/](http://www.connecticutchildrens.org/community-child-health/)

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

**Twitter:** @advancingkids

**Blog:** [www.advancingkids.org](http://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.



