

A publication of
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*24 hour crisis intervention,
support, referral*
860.747.3434
*Central Connecticut
Hartford Area*

Wheeler Clinic is a non-profit behavioral health agency serving Central Connecticut and Greater Hartford. The clinic provides mental health, substance abuse treatment, early childhood, prevention/wellness and special education services to children, adolescents, families, adults and the elderly.

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Comments or questions?
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Wheeler Clinic Continues Exceptional Growth in Hartford



Wheeler Clinic opened its first Hartford office at 645 Farmington Avenue in 1984, and during the past 25 years, the clinic's Hartford service continuum has grown and grown. Today Wheeler Clinic brings needed programs and services to more than 5,000 children, adolescents, adults and families, and has become a leading provider of behavioral health in Hartford and surrounding communities.

The first Hartford Office opened 25 years ago at 645 Farmington Avenue.

"Our capacity to serve Hartford residents and their families has expanded tremendously even within the past year as we welcomed the addition of Adult Behavioral Health Services, Care Coordination and Family Substance Abuse Treatment Services (F-SATS)," said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer "Our new and existing programs encompass a broad continuum of care that meets the needs of Hartford residents right where they need it - in their community."

Greater Hartford residents have access to a large array of services including outpatient substance abuse recovery and mental health services, problem gambling treatment, emergency mobile psychiatric services for children and adolescents, home-like residential care for children, multisystemic therapy and domestic violence intervention. The clinic also provides prevention programs, professional training, employee assistance programs and Circle of Parents parenting support groups in Hartford.

Kimberly Nelson, LCSW, vice-president of children's outpatient and community-based services said, "Our presence in Hartford continues to grow because we are dedicated to bringing services that are accessible, efficient, culturally sensitive and aligned with the needs of the community."

Our programs encompass a broad continuum of care that meets the needs of Hartford residents.

A Message from the President



Susan Walkama, LCSW

As the holidays approach I find myself reflecting on the events of the past year and taking stock of all the things for which I am thankful. I am thankful for an amazingly dedicated staff who empower clients with the creativity, zeal and dedication you see highlighted in this edition of the Update. I am thankful for an incredibly supportive and engaged Board of Trustees committed to the clinic's success.

I am thankful to our clients and their families for placing their trust in us and allowing us to guide them on their individual journeys to growth and recovery. I am thankful to our community and statewide partners who help us build networks of support services to help our clients achieve positive outcomes. I am thankful to our donors whose generosity helps sustain us in these difficult economic times.

I am thankful to you for sharing our mission to foster positive change.

Commitment to Quality Shines During Joint Commission Accreditation Visit

Every three years Wheeler Clinic undergoes a challenging, comprehensive evaluation by the Joint Commission to renew its status as an accredited behavioral health organization. Commission members visited the clinic for the 2010-2013 accreditation survey this past October, assessing the clinic's compliance in a variety of areas including medication management, environment of care, performance improvement, information management and many more.

After their visit one surveyor stated, "Wheeler Clinic is the poster child for a well-run, high quality behavioral health organization." This is an exceptional outcome given the hundreds of rigorous national performance standards the Commission establishes.

"We seek accreditation because we believe it is important to demonstrate our commitment to our clients' safety and the quality of their care," said Susan Walkama, LCSW.

The Joint Commission is the national evaluation and certifying agency for nearly 15,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including hospitals, hospice services, nursing homes, laboratories, rehabilitation centers and behavioral health care organizations.



Touching Hearts ... Changing Lives

The children and families we serve need your help more than ever!

Your support helps Wheeler Clinic touch the hearts and change the lives of 30,000 children, adolescents and adults each year. As the demand for services grows, your support is more important than ever. Please consider making a gift to Wheeler Clinic this holiday season to meet the needs of families in our community.

Touching Hearts ... Changing Lives. Together we can help families in Connecticut foster positive change.

Please make your tax-deductible gift online at www.wheelerclinic.org or mail to: Development Office, Wheeler Clinic, 91 Northwest Drive, Plainville, CT 06062.

Transitional Case Management Program Provides Vital Supports



Sara Cassano and Carmen Roldan of the Transitional Case Management program.

Wheeler Clinic's Transitional Case Management Program (TCM) serves inmates with substance use disorders who are re-entering the community after incarceration.

The program provides case management services, substance abuse treatment and linkages to support services such as employment and sober housing. Sara Cassano and Carmen Roldan work very closely with each client during the transition period, which begins three to four months prior to release to four months post-release. "Once inmates with substance use issues are back in the community, the chances of relapse are high," said Sara. "We create a transitional plan for each individual emphasizing their strengths, providing stability and supporting them on the road to recovery."

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Corrections fund the program.

For more information about Wheeler Clinic's TCM program, call (860) 224-6398.

Healing Diverse Communities

The Aetna Foundation awarded the clinic \$20,000 to establish a comprehensive cultural competency and diversity training initiative. Drawing on the expertise of the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI), twenty-six employees from across the agency completed a three-day workshop to become trainers of the Welcoming Diversity curriculum created by NCBI. These Diversity Champions will team up to provide training across the clinic.



Cheri Brown (left), executive director of the National Coalition Building Institute, and associate Joyce Shabazz lead the Welcoming Diversity training.

"I decided to become a trainer because I feel diversity is important in my personal life and for the agency as a whole," said Ashley Zorzi, clinician with the children's extended day program. "Being culturally competent helps us become more aware of cultures other than our own, which broadens and strengthens the relationships we form with our clients." Participating staff members are very committed to helping Wheeler Clinic meet the increasingly diverse needs of the over 30,000 people we serve each year.

"The Aetna Foundation is pleased to support the clinic's cultural competency initiative, helping Connecticut residents receive culturally sensitive care and ensuring positive outcomes for children, adults and families," said Christopher A. Montross, Vice President and Assistant Controller for the Aetna Foundation.

Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer for Wheeler Clinic said, "Our capacity to deliver effective, evidence-based behavioral health interventions to individuals from all backgrounds depends on the competencies of our staff. We are very grateful for the Aetna Foundation's support of this very important initiative."



Diversity Champions



Celebrating Diversity Through Hispanic Heritage Month

Staff at the clinic's 75 North Mountain Road site celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15 through October 15. Staff and clients enjoyed a variety of activities throughout the four-week recognition. Activities included Spanish classes, a wall collage, activity sheets and many others in celebration of Hispanic culture identity and language.

Amanda Perez of the Alternative Incarceration Center takes a big swing while Carlos Colon from the Adult Risk Reduction Center bravely holds the piñata at the Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration October 15.





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Ty Touched Our Hearts This Year.

**With Your Support,
We Can Change
Ty's Life.**



Please consider touching a heart and changing a life like Ty's today by making a gift to Wheeler Clinic. Your contribution fosters positive change for thousands of children, adolescents and adults in our community each year.

Give Online!

Our new online donation feature located on the Wheeler Clinic website homepage is easy to use. Just log on to www.wheelerclinic.org to give today.

Staying Up to Date the Green Way

We're going green by offering the *Update* electronically. Now you can enjoy the latest news from Wheeler Clinic and help the planet, too, with our new *E-Update* newsletter.

- Download the newest edition of *E-Update* from our website:
www.wheelerclinic.org/e-newsletter2.php
- or
- Receive the *E-Update* directly in your e-mail inbox by signing up through the website, or e-mailing Diane Tignor at dtignor@wheelerclinic.org.

Thank you for helping us
conserve precious resources!



**Fostering
Positive
Change**



For the Planet