

THE URGENT CRISIS CENTER

Since the start of this fiscal year, the UCC has supported over 750 youth in crisis. Over 90% of youth who are assessed and supported in the clinic are discharged home with a safety plan and recommendations for treatment and services. Every family receives follow-up calls from a UCC care coordinator to ensure connection to care and address barriers to accessing care. In follow up calls, we can see that youth served are successfully accessing a variety of mental health programs, including outpatient services, medication management, home based services, family therapy, trauma therapy and intensive outpatient programs.

Due to successful outreach and presentations across the state, schools are a primary referral source to this program, followed by self-referrals, and then community providers, such as pediatricians and other clinical programs. Overall, the UCC sees a wide geographic range of families, with families mainly coming from the communities of Waterbury, Cheshire, Naugatuck and Winsted.

The UCC is poised to support more families in need of urgent mental health care in the coming months and welcomes families from any community of the state.

"Thank you for making him feel comfortable and not judging him for his behaviors." - Parent



“ The whole team was great: effective communication, clear explanations and caring, thoughtful advice. - Parent ”



“ I felt like the people who took care of me today really cared about helping me. - Youth ”

NATIONAL 211 DAY



Did you know United Way 211 was started right here in Connecticut? 211 began as Infoline in 1976 as a public/private partnership of United Way and the State of Connecticut. By the mid-eighties, Infoline gained national recognition as a model system. In 1999, 2-1-1 replaced Infoline's 800 number and became the first state to use 2-1-1 statewide.

Our Mobile Crisis Intervention Services offer an immediate response 24/7 to children and youth ages up to 18 if still enrolled in school, that may be experiencing a behavioral health crisis. Our Mobile Crisis Clinicians respond to homes, schools, local hospitals, and other community settings. The goal of Mobile Crisis is to divert from unnecessary emergency department visits or inpatient hospitalizations.

To reach a Mobile Crisis Clinician please dial 2-1-1 and select option 1.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wellmore's Mobile Crisis team responded to over 2,200 calls in 2024!

WELLMORE IN THE NEWS

Kids mental health programs in CT are running out of money and at risk of shutting down - Alex Putterman

Connecticut's children's mental health programs face uncertainty as federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) run out. Key initiatives, like urgent crisis centers, stabilization beds, and 24-hour mobile crisis services, have relied on ARPA funding but now require state support to continue. "If the legislature doesn't replace the ARPA dollars, then probably what is one of the nation's most recognized and well-designed crisis systems will collapse." - Wellmore CEO, Gary Steck.



Wellmore on the front lines of financial, mental health crisis - Dan Haar

CEO Gary Steck heard some good news from the state's budget chief, who praised the 24-hour urgent care center for children, a program funded by federal pandemic relief. However, Steck remained cautious, knowing that the fate of such programs is uncertain.

As the financial situation remains in flux, Wellmore continues its vital work, with staff like Taby Ali, the associate medical director, expressing their commitment to the program's success. "I want to protect what is happening here," Ali said, highlighting the unique, hands-on nature of the care provided. Despite the challenges, Wellmore's team remains focused on delivering effective mental health care, even as the uncertainty over funding continues.



BILLBOARD AD

Keep an eye out along I-84, in Waterbury for our new billboard ad!



The dedicated staff members of our Adult Outpatient Program recently demonstrated exceptional quick thinking and compassion when they successfully assisted in saving a life during an overdose emergency. Their prompt response, teamwork, and expertise helped stabilize the individual and ensure they received the necessary medical care. In recognition of their outstanding efforts, the team was awarded a special paperweight as a token of appreciation for their selfless commitment to patient safety and well-being. Their actions truly reflect the heart of our program's mission to provide care and support in critical moments.



Left to Right: Ariel Ligowski, Dejah Heredia, Selena Perez, Alana White, Katie Nugent. Not pictured: Brittanylynn Silva

ARCHBISHOPS ANNUAL APPEAL

We are so thankful for the continued support of the Archbishops Annual Appeal and their compassionate and generous donors over the last 10+ years! This year, Wellmore received a check for \$25,000 through its Vicariate Outreach Program.

With their assistance, we continue to provide innovative and essential treatment to the struggling members of our community and their families.



Pictured Above (Left to Right) Fr. Jeffrey Romans, (Pastor, St. Bridget of Sweden in Cheshire) & Gary Steck (Wellmore CEO).

WALK IN FOR RECOVERY SUPPORT TODAY



MEDICAL CORNER

Christopher Young, M.D. - Wellmore Medical Director

Working at Wellmore over the past 18 years much has changed. Route 84 was expanded, saving me 10 minutes of commute time, smartphones became common, and we moved from a house on Pine Street to our downtown location across from the Palace Theater to name a few. Our work and community need changed too. The opioid epidemic has gone through four iterations starting with extra opioid prescriptions in the 90's, morphing into heroin, fentanyl, and most recently a fentanyl-plus epidemic. In 2022, 4 people a day, higher than the national average, were dying from unintentional overdoses in Connecticut. Also, over this period, rates of anxiety and depression in young people soared, leading to hospital emergency departments overflowing with children and adolescents in crisis. The causes, likely multifactorial, are being studied. A recent report from Lancet Psychiatry points to social isolation from the pandemic, climate change, un-regulated social media and financial inequality as potential contributors.

Working at Wellmore, for me, has been a privilege. I have felt part of a team attempting to address these issues. Oasis, a program with our partner Staywell, provides structure, therapy, and medication for those suffering from Opioid Use Disorder, has supported hundreds of patients over the past decade. Among our child and adolescent programs, we have been part of an initiative providing one of four Urgent Crisis Centers (UCC) in Connecticut designed to support, manage, and link youth in mental health crisis, to services. This is a 24-hour program that has aided hundreds of families over the past 2 years.

Delivering mental health care has faced many challenges over the years. While extremely poor reimbursement rates are nothing new, delayed treatment and an enlarging foot hold of for-profit care are straining relationships between providers and those seeking care. Prior authorizations, a process where a healthcare provider must obtain approval from insurance companies before prescribing a certain medication, have increased dramatically over recent years, leading to lags in treatment, and growing frustration for families and providers. Additionally stressing the system is the growth of private equity in healthcare, where profit margins are prioritized over community care. With an outsized focus on time and efficiency, engagement and trust, two of the most important components to wellness and healing are threatened.

I believe, however, that Wellmore will be part of the solution here too. If we can stay true to our core, listening to and putting patients first, we can continue to provide a place that people trust as partners to help navigate the health and wellbeing of their families during these most challenging times.

HUMAN RESOURCES

At our annual food truck event, we took a moment to honor the incredible dedication of employees who have been with us for five or more years. The HR team went above and beyond by customizing a special award for each of these long-standing team members, recognizing their hard work and commitment to the company. Their years of service have played a significant role in our growth and success, and we couldn't be more grateful for their continued contributions. The heartfelt appreciation shared during this celebration made the event even more memorable for everyone involved.



Meet our wonderful Human Resources team that is dedicated to creating a positive and supportive work environment, ensuring the well-being and development of every employee. With a focus on growth, collaboration, and engagement, we are here to help you thrive both personally and professionally.

Left to Right: Jessica, Kenitra, Edwige, Allison, Aimee

At a recent intern to hire luncheon, we honored our past and present interns, recognizing those currently interning and those who have moved into full-time roles. If you're seeking an internship or are a new graduate eager to kickstart your career as a clinician, explore opportunities on our careers page or connect with our recruiters for further details.

Now Hiring Clinicians!

View our open positions at:
[Wellmore.org/Careers](https://www.wellmore.org/Careers)



Wellmore
Behavioral Health
Wellness for a lifetime



DEVELOPMENT & FUNDRAISING

UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS



LINKS FORE HOPE

We would like to invite you to join us Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at Country Club of Waterbury (1 Oronoke Rd, Waterbury, CT 06708).

Currently ranked number 8 in the "Top 100 Golf Courses", 5th in the State of Connecticut by "GOLF Magazine", and nationally ranked 200 in the Historic Golf Courses of America, The Country Club of Waterbury is one of the original founding members of the (CSGA) Connecticut State Golf Association. Start gathering your foursomes, or consider sponsoring this year's event!

[Interested in participating?](#)

Email: Jackie Post - jpost@wellmore.org



GIVE LOCAL - 4/29-4/30

Have you or a loved one dealt with mental health or recovery issues? Consider donating during our Give Local fundraising event. Give Local Greater Waterbury and Litchfield Hills benefits the vital work of hundreds of nonprofit organizations in our region. This 36-hour online giving event unites donors, businesses, and organizations in giving back to our local community.

[HTTPS://WWW.GIVELOCALCCF.ORG/ORGANIZATIONS/WELLMORE-BEHAVIORAL-HEALTH](https://www.givelocalccf.org/organizations/wellmore-behavioral-health)

**SUPPORT
WELLMORE!**



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Wellmore's 11th annual Festival of Lights took place on December 5th back at our old stomping grounds, ACES at Chase. The much-loved celebration of the season featured donated wreaths and trees decorated in holiday splendor to be auctioned or raffled off to lucky participants. Thank you to all of our sponsors, donors, and everyone who offered a helping hand. With your help, we were able to raise over \$50,000!

THANKS TO OUR TOP SPONSORS

PRESENTING SPONSOR:



Hosted By:

aces at Chase

Glitter & Gold Sponsors:



**D'Amico
Pettinicchi.**
INJURY LAWYERS



Saint Mary's Hospital
Trinity Health



UPCOMING STAFF APPRECIATION EVENTS



HOMEMADE SMOOTHIE BAR - FEB & MAR 19

We love to treat our employees to a healthy, sweet treat with our annual homemade smoothie bar. Each year, we bring in The Blender Bar to make a tasty beverage for our staff members to enjoy during the work day!

COMMIT TO BE FIT - APR 1

We're excited to kick off our new employee wellness challenge, "Commit to Be Fit," designed to encourage a healthier lifestyle and promote physical activity in a fun, supportive way. Employees can track their progress, set fitness goals, and participate in challenges as a team.

MASSAGE CHAIRS - APR 8 & 9

What better way to unwind from a stressful work day than to receive a professional chair massage? We offer our employees a chance to receive a massage during the day from licensed massage therapists in the area.

SOUND HEALING - MAY 21

We are excited to offer sound healing classes to employees, providing a unique opportunity to relax, de-stress, and rejuvenate through the power of therapeutic sound.

PIZZA TRUCK - JUNE 11

The yearly arrival of the Big Green Pizza Truck is one of the hallmarks of our staff social events, with delicious handmade wood-fired pizza and salads.

QUASSY FAMILY EVENT - JUNE 27

Annual family staff event at Quassy Amusement Park, where employees and their loved ones enjoy a day of rides, games, and quality time together.



Wellmore TRAINING SERIES

MARCH 11

Psychopharmacology
Taby Ali, APRN
CEU's Pending

MARCH 31

Trauma and the Impact
of social media
Melanie Mitchell, LPC
1.5 CEU's

APRIL 30

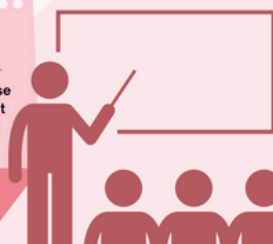
Recruitment/Benefits
Kenitra Johnson, M.S., SHRM-CP

MAY 16

Substance Use 101
Regan Moriarty, LCSW, LADC
3.5 CEU's

CONTACT

To sign up for any of these
trainings, please contact
training@wellmore.org



We are committed to supporting our employees' professional growth by offering ongoing training opportunities that provide continuing education hours. These trainings empower staff members to further advance in their programs, enhancing their skills and knowledge to better serve our clients and advance their careers.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

It's still a bit 'early' in the Legislative cycle but at this point all we know about the Session is from the Governor Lamont's budget proposal. Although a lot can happen between now and when there is a final vote to approve a two year budget, at best we are looking at a mixed bag as it relates to Wellmore. Here are a few highlights of the Governor's proposed budget:

1. Much of the 'cliff' created by the ending of Federal ARPA resources that were dedicated to non-profit providers and/or behavioral health is unaddressed (not funded).
2. There is a small cost of living listed for community provider contracts but it is only 3% and does not begin until January 2026. This is far less than what was requested by our trade group, The Alliance, and falls far short of the cumulative cost of living increase we've experienced the last few years. Additionally, this plan will actually result in a funding cut for us as it does not 'annual' so called 'one-time monies' given to providers in the current year for staff costs.
3. There is \$3.8M allocated to DSS/Medicaid to pay for services of the four Urgent Crisis Centers (this then gets a 1 for 1 match with Federal dollars to = \$7.7M). Medicaid currently provides only a very small percentage of the payment of UCC costs. Providers believe the UCC will always require direct grant funding and are advocating the allocated funds are moved to DCF as grant dollars. The per year cost to sustain the four UCC is \$13.6M. We are advocating for \$13.6M in grant dollars for DCF to fund the UCC for each year.
4. Mobile Crisis Intervention Service needs \$8.6M in grant funds to replace receding ARPR funds to maintain the current system-wide capacities. The Governor has suggested using \$8.6M from the Opioid Settlement fund to fill this gap.

Additionally, outside of the budget, there is a bill which has been raised that makes the payment of non-profit provider contracts become tied to the annual, actual inflation rate (the 'cost of living'). This would begin the process of making these contracts fair based on the real, current cost of doing business.



Gary Steck, CEO of Wellmore Behavioral Health, in a treatment room at the agency's urgent crisis center for children and youths in Waterbury on Feb. 5, 2025, the day the governor released his proposed budget.

Dan Haar/Hearst CT Media