

# WINSTED HEALTH CENTER FOUNDATION

AND

## WINSTED HEALTH CENTER

### Background and History

From 1902 until 1996 the residents of Northwest Connecticut and Southwest Massachusetts received health care services from the Winsted Memorial Hospital, previously the Litchfield County Hospital. Due to a variety of causes the Hospital declared bankruptcy in late 1996 and the doors to the Hospital closed on October 25, 1996. This left the community without acute care services, including emergency services and related ambulatory services, e.g. laboratory, radiology, etc. Area residents would not accept the elimination of all health services from the Northwest Corner and after extensive community fund raising efforts a new 501 C-3 Foundation, the Winsted Health Center Foundation, was incorporated and purchased the former Winsted Memorial Hospital facilities from the bankruptcy court.

The Winsted Health Center Foundation adopted the following Mission Statement:

**The Winsted Health Center Foundation is committed to assuring the highest quality of health care for all residents of Northwest Connecticut and Southwest Massachusetts and providing the leadership and advocacy to reach this goal. The Foundation, in collaboration with appropriate partners, will assure the provision of ambulatory health care services that respond to the needs of the residents, will create programs to make health care services more accessible and will provide programs to assist residents in maintaining an optimum level of health.**

The Winsted Health Center also adopted a unique operating strategy. The Foundation felt that it did not need to become a provider of services or a competitor in the health care field. The Board of Trustees felt its role was to identify community health needs, develop programs to meet those needs and partner with an existing provider to deliver such services. **The Foundation thus created the Winsted Health Center, a 501 C-3 corporation, to coordinate the delivery of health services and to oversee the physical plant while the Foundation focused on raising funds to support these efforts.** One Board of Trustees oversees the activities of both the Foundation and the Center. This unique, but successful, strategy has not only resulted in bringing needed health services to the community but has done it at the lowest possible cost. The first goal was to restore those services most needed by the community. Thus, the Foundation reached out to Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, a community hospital located about 15 miles from Winsted, to become the first partner of the Winsted Health Center. In 1998 Charlotte Hungerford initiated a twelve hour emergency service complemented by a twenty four hour paramedic program. This brought critical emergency services back to the

community. In order to enable this service to work effectively, and to provide other needed services to the community, Charlotte Hungerford also opened a laboratory service and radiology service, including mammography. Since 1998 the Charlotte Hungerford Hospital has also initiated a cardiac rehabilitation service, pulmonary rehabilitation service and sleep laboratories at the Winsted Health Center.

Early in 1999 Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, a large teaching facility in Hartford, Connecticut became the Health Center's second partner. There was a need for quality primary care physician office space on the campus of the Winsted Health Center. Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center agreed to rehabilitate the 1902 building, the original hospital, for such offices. Upon the completion of this rehabilitation the building was occupied by physicians with privileges at three different hospitals and representing family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics, surgery, and selected subspecialties. In addition to making space available for physicians this also enhanced patient convenience by placing physician's offices in close proximity to the laboratory, radiology and other services. Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center also opened a physical medicine service in this building to serve the public.

In 1999, the Veterans Administration opened a Primary Care Center to serve veterans in the area. The Center initially provided services one day a week with a part time physician. The Center is now open five days a week and has a panel of 4,000 patients who receive their primary medical care at this site. In 2004, the Winsted Health Center gained another partner when the Northwest Center for Mental Health and Family Services began providing care from the Center. In 2005 Carla Hutt, N.D., Naturopathic Physician and Heather Cappabianca, Massage Therapist began to provide services at the Health Center. In March 2006, the Saint Francis Center for Occupational Health began offering services to local employers at the Health Center. The focus of the Center is on work related injuries and illness care, preventative health services and physical examinations, and drug and alcohol screening and testing services.

On February 27, 2006 Superior Court Judge Elizabeth Bozzuto ordered that \$ 2.1 million in charitable assets of the former Winsted Memorial Hospital be transferred to the Foundation. Among the funds transferred to the Health Center was the Susan B. Perry Fund. In 1909 Mrs. Perry gave \$15,000 to establish an "old peoples home" adjacent to the Winsted Memorial Hospital. That bequest was never used and in the ensuing years the fund grew to approximately \$1.5 million. Mrs. Perry's gift will be used for the development of a variety of elder care services and facilities which will entail making some of the needed renovations to the Health Center. The other funds transferred to the Health Center will be used for additional renovations and programs. Some will be used to provide health care assistance to uninsured and underinsured area residents.

In March 2006 Helping Hands Chore Service, an affiliate of the Winsted Health Center Foundation, was established to help elderly and disabled residents remain safely and independently in their homes. Helping Hands provides chore services to residents over 60 in Winsted, Colebrook, New Hartford, and Barkhamsted. Chore workers provide services such as vacuuming, dusting, dish washing, laundry, meal preparation, yard work,

and local grocery shopping and similar services. This program is funded by a grant from the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging, donation from the town of Winchester, and voluntary donations from the recipients of services.

### **Whom Do We Serve**

The Winsted Health Center and its partners, provides health services to 30,000 people in Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Hartland, East Hartland, West Hartland, New Hartford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Riverton, Winchester, Winsted (all communities in Connecticut) as well as Sandisfield, Mass. and Tolland, Mass.

### **Operating Structure**

The Winsted Health Center Foundation and the Winsted Health Center are governed by a Board of Trustees of sixteen individuals. These Trustees are appointed by Corporators, not less than 40 or more than 60, who represent the community. The Board of Trustees functions through the following committees; Executive, Finance, Fund Development, Education and Public Relations, Nominating, Bylaws, Strategic Planning and Facilities. In order to focus on its operating strategy of creating partnerships the Center has kept its staff small employing only an Executive Director, Facilities Manager, part time Administrative Assistant, part time housekeeper, and limited contract help.

### **2005 Activity**

The following are the number of visits and treatments at the Health Center during 2005.

**7,172** Visits to the Emergency Room  
**20,000** Visits to Primary Care Physicians  
**21,232** Laboratory tests  
**5,346** Radiology Exams  
**4,700** Physical Therapy treatments  
**2,671** Visits to the Veterans Administration Clinic  
    **345** Respiratory Therapy treatments  
**1,697** Pulmonary Rehabilitation treatments  
**1,606** Cardiac Rehabilitation treatments  
    **375** EKG exams  
    **457** Sleep Lab treatments  
    **360** Mental Health visits  
    **270** Massage Therapy treatments  
    **400** Visits to Naturopathic Physician

**66,631 visits, exams, or treatments were provided at the Health Center in 2005 – an increase of 4% over the activity in 2004**

### **2006 Goals**

The Winsted Health Center is planning, in collaborations with its partners, to achieve a number of goals during 2006.

- Establish first phase of comprehensive Elder Care Program – this first phase will consist of a Geriatric Assessment Center. It is anticipated that this program will be in conjunction with the University of Connecticut Center for Aging and the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging.
- Undertake major physical plant renovations utilizing the court awarded funds. These renovations will address building and life safety issues (sprinklers, fire alarm systems); plant improvements (elevator upgrade, roof replacement); energy conservation (window replacement); appearance of site (new façade, paving of parking areas); and renovation of second and third floor to accommodate elder care programs and other new partners. All of the physical plant improvements are necessary if elder care and related programs are to be developed at the Health Center.
- Continue efforts to expand access to health care for the uninsured and underinsured.
- Continue efforts to create dental service for uninsured and underinsured children.

#### **Winsted Health Center Foundation Corporators -2006**

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Chris Battista, Winchester Center  
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**Winsted Health Center Foundation**

**And Winsted Health Center**

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Richard Benfer, Executive Director

**Additional Information**

If you would like additional information about the Winsted Health Center Foundation or the Winsted Health Center, contact Richard Benfer, Executive Director at 860-379-0888.