

Connecticut Office of Rural Health

2019 Annual Report

Year in Review

This report highlights the 2018-19 funded initiatives and major activities of the CT Office of Rural Health (CT-ORH). For more detailed information, please contact the CT-ORH directly.

Health care branching



out
to rural
communities

FUNDED INITIATIVES

In 2019, the CT-ORH provided sub-award funding to the volunteer EMS services **Bantam Fire Company**, **Burlington Volunteer Fire Company**, and **Harwinton Ambulance Association** for their training initiatives.

Bantam Fire Company provided *Stop the Bleed* (STB) hemorrhage training to nearly 200 community residents and Regional School District 6 staff. Burlington Volunteer Fire Company, in addition to STB courses, offered Safe Babysitting, CPR and Emergency Medical Responder trainings.

Harwinton Ambulance Association (HAA) offered STB training to nearly 270 residents and first responders, and partnered with EMS groups in neighboring towns, acting as an area STB resource. HAA also offered CPR and First Aid trainings, as well as Safe Babysitting courses to provide youth with the skills necessary to responsibly and safely care for infants and children.

HAA was designated as a “Community Star” by the **National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health** (NOSORH) and was honored in a ceremony attended by local and state officials at HAA headquarters. Community Stars were recognized nationally in a book: <https://en.calameo.com/read/004572339cdf7d97c0e4>

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CONNECT
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Meet our state's 2019
**COMMUNITY
STAR**

**Harwinton Ambulance
Association**
Harwinton, Connecticut

National Rural
Health Day
Celebrating the Power of Rural!



The Litchfield County Opiate Task Force held a training for providers who work to support families of those suffering from substance use disorder. The training utilized the “Invitation to Change Approach” by CMC Foundation for Change, an evidence-based model that addresses gaps in support for families.

In addition, the Task Force is developing a transfer protocol for patients with opiate use disorder to connect them with **Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT)** services. Utilizing this protocol, the Community Case Manager at a local hospital facilitates connections between patients released from the ED, who are seeking treatment, with local MAT providers.

Northeast District Department of Health (NDDH) rolled out a VIAL OF LIFE program, which provides first responders with emergency medical information in a kit, often attached to the refrigerator. A bright red VIAL OF LIFE decal is mounted on the home’s front window to alert first responders to its location. NDDH distributed 3,000 kits to community members and EMS organizations, with a focus on seniors and vulnerable populations. According to Sue Starkey, NDDH Director of Health, “One of the functions of public health is to mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems...the VIAL OF LIFE fully supports this objective.”

United Services, Inc., the behavioral health and social service provider in CT’s northeast corner, held its annual benefit concert, *Particle Accelerator*, which raises awareness of local prevention and mental health programs and resources. The CT-ORH provided funding for the purchase of outreach and awareness materials for this and other public events hosted by United Services.

ACTIVITIES

The Providers, a documentary chronicling the challenges of health care providers and their patients in rural New Mexico, was screened at the Yale Film Study Center.

The CT-ORH participated in the post-screening panel along with **Christopher Kolker, MD, Medical Director of United Community and Family Services** of Norwich, CT.

Governor Lamont issued a gubernatorial proclamation announcing CT’s recognition of November 21 as **National Rural Health Day**. National Rural Health Day was further celebrated by honoring CT’s 2019 Community Star, Harwinton Ambulance Association. **Gertrude O’Sullivan**, Director of Communications and Special Programs at **Foundation for Community Health**, received a Community Star honorable mention from the NOSORH selection committee for her work on rural health initiatives, including the Health Profession Rural Summer Immersion Program (see next page).

The Foundation for Community Health entered its 4th year in offering a two-week rural pipeline program for future health care providers. The **Health Profession Rural Summer Immersion Program** engages **MD, PA and APRN** students in considering a professional future serving the health needs of rural populations. The CT-ORH joined efforts with the Foundation for Community Health, **Northwestern CT Community College** and **Health360** to offer students participation in a clinical program, shadowing at 7 rural medical facilities in CT, NY and MA, as well as volunteering at the **University of Connecticut Migrant Farm Workers Clinic**, and participating in community social events and activities.

The program has no operating budget thanks to the generosity of the medical facilities that host the students. Highlighting the quality of life in our rural communities, schools and local restaurants also absorb or donate the cost of providing housing and meals. Applications for the program are accepted from students attending the University of Connecticut, Touro and Quinnipiac medical schools.

Northwestern CT Community College (NCCC) Becomes a Tobacco and Vape Free Campus

In July 2019, after an 18-month implementation period, NCCC became fully Tobacco and Vape Free. The CT-ORH played a lead role in implementation, as part of a grant from the **Department of Public Health** and **Southern CT State University**.

The CT-ORH presented on this initiative at the *Tobacco and College Health Workshop* at University of Connecticut, and represented NCCC on a panel at the **CT Public Health Association** Annual Meeting and Conference along with Southern CT State University, Sacred Heart University and Yale University. In summary, synergies across the state, including Tobacco 21 legislation, led to strong progress in tobacco and vape prevention in 2019.

CT-ORH/NCCC hosted **Dana Cavallo, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Yale School of Medicine**, who shared her experiences as a researcher and clinician working with adolescents and young adults in the forum, **“know the risks. know the resources, kNOw vape.”**

The Nursing/Allied Health Division at NCCC
and the Connecticut Office of Rural Health
Present


**know the risks.
know the resources.
kNOw Vape.**

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Guest Speaker:
Dana Cavallo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
of Psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine

**Thursday, February 28th
12pm - 1pm
Draper Learning Center**

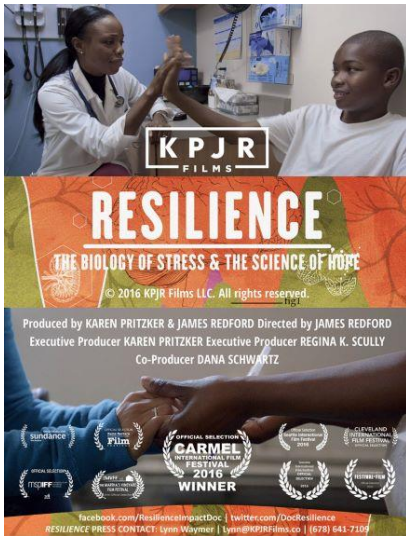
Dana Cavallo has conducted numerous studies regarding tobacco products with an emphasis on vaping. She will share her experience as a researcher and clinician working with adolescents and young adults.

 Northwestern Connecticut
Community College
Park Place East • Windsor, CT 06098
www.nccc.edu

Health Enhancement Communities

The CT-ORH convened two rural stakeholder meetings in 2018-19 to learn about the new state initiative, *Health Enhancement Communities*. The effort aims to make CT the healthiest state in the nation, while slowing the increase in Connecticut's health care spending by focusing on two social determinants – improving child well-being and increasing healthy weight across the lifespan.

The office collaborated with **Charlotte Hungerford Hospital** and the **Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation** on a pre-planning grant from CT's Office of Health Strategy to form a Health Enhancement Community for Northwestern CT. CT-ORH will continue to help build on this foundational work in 2020.



Resilience Screening

A public screening of the documentary *Resilience* took place in 2019, followed by facilitated dialogue. The documentary chronicles **adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)**, traumatic events occurring before age 18 which are strongly correlated with lifelong negative health outcomes. The screening was a collaboration with **NCCC, EdAdvance Nurturing Families** and **Family Strides**.

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