



# University of Connecticut Health Center

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## Connecticut Health

*The next generation of health care development*

PROGRAM OF THE MONTH:

### Huntington's Disease Program

James D. Duffy, M.D., Bonnie L. Hennig, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., Mary Jane Fitzpatrick, A.P.R.N.

Huntington's Disease (HD) is a genetic, degenerative, terminal brain disorder for which there is no present effective treatment or cure. Though less public than Lou Gehrig's disease, HD ravages a person's life and family much in the same way. Huntington's Disease affects both mind and body, resulting in personality changes, depression and mood swings, as well as unsteady gait and involuntary movements, among other symptoms. HD is estimated to affect 30,000 individuals across the United States, with a known popula-

tion of 400 in Connecticut. Another 150,000 persons are at risk for HD by virtue of having a parent or sibling affected with the disease. HD affects as many people as Hemophilia, Cystic Fibrosis, or muscular dystrophy.

The Huntington's Disease (HD) Program, directed by the University of Connecticut Health Center and housed at Hartford Hospital, serves the comprehensive physical, mental, and emotional needs of HD patients, their families, and

their extended care systems. The program was established in 1997 by the Connecticut General Assembly as an attempt to improve the quality of life of HD-affected individuals, as well as develop the capacity for research toward a cure. In a nutshell, the HD program forms a vital support link with patients and families to act as an intermediary in the complex health care world while studying the disease to contribute to successful treatments and cures.

### Connecticut Health General Information

*Connecticut Health* facilitates and promotes public health and public sector service to the State of Connecticut. The *Connecticut Health* Project Database serves as a central source of information regarding UCHC's community and public health programs. Working with governmental and community-based organizations, it seeks out opportunities for UCHC faculty and staff to collaborate on new initiatives, and it consults on the development of new projects that are initiated from within the Health Center.

*Connecticut Health* represents for the University of Connecticut Health Center a new and permanent emphasis on community and public health. It embodies the contribution of the Health Center to the health of the citizens of the entire state. From *Connecticut Health* will come an expanded range of programs that augment the Health Center's traditional mission in education, research, and high quality medicine and fulfill its obligation as a publicly funded institution.

Connecticut Health projects take place in virtually all 169 Connecticut towns and meet a wide range of community and public health needs.

### Celebrate Women offers Free Membership

Celebrate Women is a new, free membership program directed by the University of Connecticut Health Center aimed at improving the health of women of all ages.

The Celebrate Women initiative at the University of Connecticut Health Center understands the unique health needs of a woman - mind, body, and spirit. Its free membership program offers educational, research, and clinical service

advantages, including: an informative quarterly newsletter; discounted or free admission to sponsored events, health screenings, and seminars; and discounts and special offers from local merchants. In addition, the program centers around nationally recognized leaders in areas such as breast health, osteoporosis, cardiology, dermatology, and incontinence, as well as specialists in UConn's comprehensive OB/

GYN program, to care for women from adolescence through childbearing years, menopause, and beyond. The Celebrate Women program operates in conjunction with the Charlotte Johnson Hollfelder Center for Women's Health, located in the University of Connecticut Health Center main lobby.

To learn more, visit [www.celebrate.uchc.edu](http://www.celebrate.uchc.edu) or call 860-679-8899 or toll free at 1-866-4-FEMALE

### Highlights -Did you know . . . ?

- Medical errors account for over 98,000 deaths per year in hospitals alone. Find out how UCHC addresses these avoidable fatalities under keyword "Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement."
- The number of children suffering from asthma in the US is estimated to have increased by 49 percent since 1982. See what UCHC is doing about it! Search the Connecticut Health website by keyword: asthma
- Over 93,000 UConn Alumni currently live in Connecticut.

University of Connecticut Health Center  
263 Farmington Ave.  
Farmington, CT 06030-3967

Phone: (860) 679-3236  
Fax: (860) 679-1101  
Email: [caconlon@adp.uchc.edu](mailto:caconlon@adp.uchc.edu)

[www.connecticuthealth.org](http://www.connecticuthealth.org)



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Mailing Address Line 5

Because your own strength is unequal to the task, do not assume that it is beyond the powers of man; but if anything is within the powers and province of man, believe that it is within your own compass also.

— Marcus Aurelius —

## ***Connecticut Health* Engages the City of Hartford**

*Connecticut Health* staff have found a new outlet for serving the underserved—by teaming up with local agencies in need of assistance in project development and grant writing.

*Connecticut Health* staff have been working extensively with several agencies in Hartford to bridge gaps in health care services: Hartford's Federally Qualified Health Centers, or FQHC's; Hartford Behavioral Health; the Hartford Health Department; and the Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation.

FQHC's provide health care to local communities, including uninsured populations. The focus of grant activities has been to enhance the clinical capacity of these health centers by expanding behavioral health services for the homeless. *Connecticut Health* staff

members also assisted Hartford Behavioral Health, a community mental health agency, in a similar grant application. Future collaboration may include efforts to expand the numbers of mid-level practitioners available on-site at federally qualified health centers.

In work with the Hartford Health Department, *Connecticut Health* has focused on problems acute in Hartford, such as substance abuse and the lack of access to mental health services. Working together with the Hispanic Health Council, Community Health Services, Alcohol and Drug Recovery Centers, Hartford Behavioral Health, and the Psychiatry department of the Health Center, the grant proposes to create Hartford Outreach, a collaborative effort to find and engage in effective treatment for young adults, ages 16-30, who are actively using addictive sub-

stances and who are enmeshed in the drug culture. The grant proposes to serve 480 youth over three years.

Additional *Connecticut Health* efforts have concentrated on assisting the Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation with a "State Innovation Grant," designed to enhance and streamline the health care components of DMR's client support plan.

By assisting in the writing of several grants and engaging faculty members, fellows, residents, and researchers in the community, *Connecticut Health* has succeeded in furthering collaborative relationships targeted at linking Health Center resources to critical public health issues for the City of Hartford.