

For Immediate Release
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**LOCAL HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATIONS TO CONDUCT
COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS**

Area residents encouraged to participate in comprehensive assessment survey to determine the region's most critical health care needs.

WILLIMANTIC -- A group of leading Windham County healthcare providers have announced that a region-wide *Community Health Needs Assessment* that could both inform and determine future funding for the area's most pressing healthcare needs, will take place in August and September. Residents who live in Windham County are encouraged to participate in the *Assessment* which will occur primarily through focus groups, one-on-one community leader interviews and telephone surveys. The findings of the survey will assist health care leaders in developing a blueprint for health and wellness programming focus and funding in the Windham County region for the next 3-5 years.

The consortium of Windham County healthcare providers that are developing and funding the *Community Health Needs Assessment* consists of eight organizations: Windham Hospital, Day Kimball Healthcare, Natchaug Hospital, Generations Family Health Center, United Services, VNA East, Northeast District Department of Health and Community Health Resources.

According to Heather Tindall, spokeswoman for the consortium: "The very best way that we as members of the consortium can be responsive to the truest healthcare needs of our communities, is to hear directly from our residents. This helps us ensure that energies and dollars are focused appropriately." She continued, "This is an opportunity for citizens to have their voices heard about what they think we can do in healthcare to make the most profound impact and meet the greatest needs in the towns where they live." Tindall concluded, "If you receive a phone call, please take a few minutes to answer the survey questions or attend a focus group."

The *Assessment* will be conducted by the nationally known research group, the *Center for Public Policy and Research (CRPP)*, who has conducted more than 3.5 million surveys and more than 3,500 focus groups across the nation in support of research. Tindall said CRPP will collect resident input in such areas as community healthcare needs, health status, and important information from residents on care in many areas including diabetes, sleep, exercise, oral health, immunizations, tobacco and alcohol use, family planning, behavioral health, autism, healthcare access, and screenings."

The focus groups are planned for early August with surveys in early September. For more information about the Community Health Needs Assessment or to request a summary of results when completed, residents may call 860-928-6541, extension 2026.

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