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NORWALK HOSPITAL AWARDED FOR ITS COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

CHA and DPH Recognize Norwalk Hospital with the 2024 Connecticut's Hospital Community Service Award



WALLINGFORD – The **Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA)** and the **Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH)** have awarded **Norwalk Hospital** the **2024 Connecticut's Hospital Community Service Award** in recognition of their Community Psychiatric Outreach Program.

The annual award, presented jointly by CHA and DPH, recognizes a Connecticut hospital or healthcare system that has made an outstanding contribution to its community.

Norwalk Hospital was presented with the prestigious award by DPH Commissioner Manisha Juthani, MD, at the 2024 CHA Annual Meeting that took place on June 13, 2024 at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville.

“I am very proud of this team who are so devoted to caring for those struggling in our communities and helping them find a healthier and more stable path forward,” said **Peter Cordeau, President, Norwalk Hospital**. “This recognition highlights how our population health professionals and the community care teams are collaborating in new ways to innovate and evolve to meet the needs of our communities.”

“Our mission is to protect and improve the health and safety of the people of Connecticut which is a basic human right and a priority of the state,” said **DPH Commissioner Dr. Manisha Juthani**. “Thank you to Norwalk Hospital for addressing these two community needs. Access to care and mental health services are top priorities for not only every hospital in Connecticut, but every hospital in the country. Norwalk Hospital is making positive inroads, especially with some of our most vulnerable populations in southern Connecticut. By meeting the homeless population directly in the community, this program removes one additional barrier to care.”

“CHA is honored to be joined by DPH in presenting this award in recognition of Norwalk Hospital’s Community Psychiatric Outreach Program, which provides psychiatric care to at-risk populations including homeless populations, meeting individuals in their communities, and removing barriers to care,” said **Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA**. “We applaud the Norwalk Hospital team for working to improve access to care and implement a forward-thinking approach to address behavioral health needs by meeting individuals where they are to improve health outcomes.”

This program has provided free psychiatric assessments, arranged for referrals, and supported individuals in the completion of verification of disability forms, which are essential component for many individuals facing homelessness to qualify for housing.

Norwalk Hospital’s Community Psychiatric Outreach Program involves leveraging third-year psychiatry residents to meet the growing need of delivering psychiatric care to at-risk populations “in place” in the community. These individuals were often not engaging in outpatient psychiatric care for a variety of reasons.

In July of 2022, Norwalk Hospital established a regular community health rotation for these psychiatric residents to provide services in the field. Residents go into the community to perform free psychiatric assessments and arrange referrals as needed. These evaluations are performed on the streets, in shelters, in residents’ homes, and in local nonprofit organization offices. The assessments can also be used to support the completion of verification of disability forms, which is an essential component to obtain housing. Requests for these services can be made by any local community organization.

The program currently provides five hours a week of free psychiatric evaluation to the community. An attending psychiatrist provides supervision time to the residents and oversees all cases. In addition, a hospital staff member assists with accepting the requests for service and coordinating the community visits. These functions are performed in addition to other duties, and no fees are charged.

To date, the program has conducted psychiatric assessments for approximately 50 patients. In addition to performing these community evaluations, the psychiatric residents often make space in their schedules to see the patients on an ongoing outpatient basis, if needed, due to otherwise long outpatient mental health treatment wait times.

Learn more about the program by watching the award recognition video [here](#).

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Nicole Rall, CHA
(860) 992-7571
rall@chime.org