

For Immediate Release  
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**CHDI and United Community and Family Services announce a five-year initiative to expand substance use disorder services for transitional-aged youth in Eastern Connecticut**

*The Connecticut Treatment Expansion and Enhancement (CT-TREE) initiative will enhance substance use treatment for youth ages 16 - 25*

Farmington, Connecticut - The Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) and United Community and Family Services (UCFS) are launching a five-year initiative to improve the treatment of substance use disorders for transitional-aged youth in eastern Connecticut. The Connecticut Treatment Expansion and Enhancement (CT-TREE) initiative is funded by a \$2.7 million grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to CHDI. The primary goal of CT-TREE is to enhance comprehensive treatment, early detection and intervention, and recovery support services for transitional-aged youth (ages 16-25) with substance use disorders (SUD). CHDI partnered with UCFS, which operates Federally Qualified Health Centers in Norwich, New London, Griswold, Plainfield, and Colchester, to develop the CT-TREE initiative.

"Expanding access to effective substance use treatment is a public health priority, both nationally and here in Connecticut," said Jeff Vanderploeg, President and CEO of CHDI. "Very few adolescents who need substance use treatment receive it. We look forward to working with UCFS to help teens and young adults in eastern Connecticut get the care they need."

"This partnership with CHDI and resources from SAMHSA are timely and sorely needed," said Jennifer Granger, President and CEO of UCFS. "Adding this evidence-based model to the integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services we provide is the type of cutting-edge program needed to address the challenges youth face in eastern Connecticut."

Older teens and young adults in Connecticut's eastern region have disproportionately high rates of substance use disorders, overdose, and illicit drug use compared to the rest of the state and nationally. In addition, many factors interfere with youth and young adults getting substance use care, such as addiction stigma, substance use normalization, lack of provider substance use training, separate mental health and substance use treatment systems, and limited reimbursement options that are below federal guidelines.

The CT-TREE initiative will expand two well-established, evidence-based substance use disorder treatment models at UCFS across the region: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) and Multidimensional Family Therapy for Transitional Aged Youth (MDFT-TAY). The initiative will provide SBIRT training to at least 100 UCFS providers and partners, with the goal of screening at least 1000 youth ages 16-25 for SUD. CT-TREE also aims to provide at least 450 transitional-aged youth with MDFT-TAY and ensure the treatment is delivered with fidelity and achieves outcome benchmarks for youth functioning and stability.

Enhancements of substance use disorder services made possible through this initiative will include specialized training on delivering these evidence-based models to this age group and an innovative, hybrid delivery of MDFT-TAY that integrates in-home, in-office, and virtual sessions. MDFT-TAY clinicians will also receive advanced training in providing services that are trauma-informed, specialized for the LGBTQIA+ community, and for transitional-aged youth who are caregivers themselves. CT-TREE will establish an Advisory Committee that includes stakeholders from the Connecticut Department of Children and Families and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, community providers, and transitional-aged youth living with SUDs.

The CT-TREE initiative is the second initiative led by CHDI to expand evidence-based substance use screening, early intervention, and treatment for youth across Connecticut. CHDI is also working with the State of Connecticut to expand access to early substance use care over the next three years by disseminating Adolescent Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (A-SBIRT) to over 100 outpatient clinicians. A-SBIRT is a comprehensive, evidence-based approach that efficiently trains direct service staff to detect substance use and briefly treat substance use concerns for youth ages 12-17. The initiatives build upon CHDI's ongoing children's outpatient quality improvement activities and will increase access to substance use screening and services for Connecticut youth, young adults, and families.

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### **About CHDI**

*CHDI is an independent not-for-profit intermediary organization providing a bridge to better behavioral health and well-being for children, youth, and families. We collaborate with policymakers, providers, and partners to advance system, practice, and policy solutions that result in equitable and optimal outcomes in Connecticut and beyond. Our areas of expertise include evidence-based and best practice dissemination, comprehensive school mental health, quality improvement and measurement-based care, system development and integration, trauma-informed systems, and best practice model development. Learn more at [www.chdi.org](http://www.chdi.org).*

### **About UCFS**

*UCFS Healthcare is an innovative organization that has been committed to the community for over 146 years. With almost 17,000 clients, 400 employees, multiple locations throughout eastern Connecticut including 14 community & school based health centers; we have only 1 mission –to eliminate health disparities and improve the health and well-being of the community. We live this mission by providing medical, dental, behavioral and eldercare services onsite and in the community. We are the oldest healthcare network in our region, providing care regardless of insurance status or the ability to pay for services. You can learn more about how UCFS Healthcare by visiting our website at [ucfshealthcare.org](http://ucfshealthcare.org).*