



## NEWS RELEASE

**NOT – For Immediate Release**

### **United Health Foundation Announces Two New Partnerships and Nearly \$2.5 Million in Funding to Support Hartford Families**

- *United Health Foundation joins with The Governor's Prevention Partnership to reduce drug use among area teens*
- *Partnership with The Village for Families and Children will provide comprehensive, coordinated behavioral and primary care to local families*

**HARTFORD, Conn. (Feb. 14, 2017)** – To address growing teen drug use and provide integrated health care for local Connecticut families, United Health Foundation, Governor Dannel P. Malloy, The Governor's Prevention Partnership and The Village for Families and Children announced two new grant partnerships in Hartford.

The \$2.35 million in grants from United Health Foundation to The Governor's Prevention Partnership and to The Village for Children and Families will help each partner increase local education, outreach and engagement among Hartford teens and their families.

The grants will fund separate, three-year initiatives with each partner. These partnerships are part of United Health Foundation's city-based approach to provide resources to programs that connect communities to care, support whole-person health and build healthier communities.

Gov. Malloy and other community leaders joined executives from The Governor's Prevention Partnership, The Village, United Health Foundation and UnitedHealthcare at The Village in Hartford for the announcement.

"Addiction is a disease, and together we can treat and prevent it. These programs will help further strengthen community and family connections, and help teens develop into active and engaged members of our communities," said Gov. Malloy. "I thank United Health Foundation for this investment to help improve access to care and address teenage drug use, and I applaud all the partners working to ensure our communities and families no longer struggle with the grave costs of this illness."

At the end of the three-year grants, The Partnership and The Village will issue white papers with their respective results and provide details on how these initiatives may be replicated.

"By working closely with these community organizations to address critical health issues, particularly increasing drug use among teenagers, we are helping build a healthier Hartford," said Martha Temple, senior vice president of Optum Behavioral Health.

## **Partnering to Address Rising Teenage Drug Use**

According to the 2015 Connecticut Youth Risks Behavior survey, Hispanic children have higher substance abuse-rates. In coordination with Family Life Education (FLE), a Hartford-based nonprofit family outreach organization, the partnership will:

- create an awareness and outreach program for children, parents and the community focused on substance abuse among teenagers; and
- introduce programs to identify and refer high-risk youth for support services.

“This multifaceted community education initiative will reinforce in-school awareness efforts,” said Jill Spinetti, president and CEO of the Governor’s Prevention Partnership. “While it is important to educate young people about the dangers of drug use, parents and other adults in the community can play a critical role in reinforcing anti-drug messages, identifying signs of substance use before it becomes a more serious issue and helping families get the care their kids need.”

In the past three years, the number of drug deaths in Connecticut increased 44 percent, according to the [2016 America’s Health Rankings Annual Report](#). While Connecticut ranked third in overall health among all 50 states, it ranked 28<sup>th</sup> on this measure, highlighting the need for greater collaboration and increased efforts to address substance use.

## **Coordinating Care for Hartford Families**

The Village will integrate behavioral health and primary care services at two pediatric practices in East Hartford and West Hartford, which are run by the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. Working together, the team of primary care doctors, psychologists and care coordinators will:

- address the range of physical and social aspects of each child’s health and well-being by using health screenings, increased parent education and referral processes to coordinate clinical care and connect families to needed community services, and;
- intervene early to prevent serious medical and mental health issues with local children and their families.

“The future of health care is in integrating primary care and behavioral health services,” said Galo A. Rodriguez, MPH, president and CEO of The Village. “This funding by United Health Foundation will help us demonstrate how this type of integrated system will result in improved health outcomes for children, better quality of care, and short- and long-term cost savings.”

### **About Governor’s Prevention Partnership**

Created in 1989, the Governor’s Prevention Partnership is a not-for-profit partnership between state government and business leaders with a mission to keep Connecticut’s youth, safe, successful and drug-free. Co-chaired by Governor Dannel Malloy and a local business leader, the organization focuses on positive school climate, mentoring and the prevention of underage drinking and substance abuse.

### **The Village for Families & Children (The Village)**

The Village is a non-profit multi-service organization that has served the Greater Hartford area for more than 200 years. Its mission is “to build a community of strong, healthy families who protect and nurture children.” To fulfill its mission, The Village provides a full range of behavioral health, early childhood and youth development, substance abuse treatment, and family support services. To learn more, visit [www.thevillage.org](http://www.thevillage.org), call 860-236-4511 or follow us at [Facebook.com/thevillagect](https://www.facebook.com/thevillagect).

**About United Health Foundation**

Through collaboration with community partners, grants and outreach efforts, United Health Foundation works to improve our health system, build a diverse and dynamic health workforce and enhance the well-being of local communities. United Health Foundation was established by UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) in 1999 as a not-for-profit, private foundation dedicated to improving health and health care. To date, United Health Foundation has committed nearly \$315 million to programs and communities around the world. We invite you to learn more at [www.unitedhealthgroup.com/SocialResponsibility](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/SocialResponsibility) or follow Facebook.com/UHGGives.

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