



Vita Health and Wellness District

Stamford Hospital | Stamford, CT

PROGRAM DETAILS

Social Determinants : Community Infrastructure, Education, Employment & Income, Food Insecurity, Health Behaviors, Housing Instability

Target Population: Adults, Children/Adolescents, Families

Program Setting: Community

Partners: Education, External Community Organization, External Health Care, Government

Active Program: Yes

In 2000, Stamford Hospital (SH) partnered with Charter Oak Communities (COC) to expand and redevelop their respective real estate holdings on Stamford's West Side. The 2013 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) identified the neighborhood as a priority due to its disproportionate share of chronic diseases. The CHNA results, along with the Affordable Care Act's emphasis on addressing the upstream causes of disease, prompted Stamford Hospital to undertake a series of strategic investments in the surrounding community. Stamford Hospital and COC crafted a unique exchange of owned properties that enabled both to complete a series of complex redevelopment projects, including a new hospital and hundreds of housing units. This relationship led to the Vita Community Collaborative in 2012, which aims to promote health and wellness in the West Side neighborhood. Vita developed an interactive tool, entitled *Vita Impact* designed to show the linkages between targeted social initiatives and other characteristics that can broadly impact a community.

The Vita Health and Wellness district has become a health-themed neighborhood where numerous distressed public housing projects have been replaced with lower-density, mixed-income communities with dedicated resident support services, public green spaces, an independent pharmacy, and a revitalized hospital and campus. Each aspect of Vita addresses the social determinants of health, including healthy housing, economic stability, education and attainment, public health and access to medical care, physical activity and improved social cohesion. The core of Vita includes hundreds of new mixed-income, townhouse-style communities (with more under construction). Vita's unique volunteer-powered urban farm (www.FairgateFarm.com) hosts numerous community-building programs such as nutrition education, cooking classes, food waste composting, and food security. Residents of the Vita community are afforded access to non-emergent medical care with two federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) serving patients on Medicaid and Medicare along with the underinsured, and the American Free Clinic, which provides primary care for uninsured patients who do not qualify for any government funded programs. Stamford Hospital supports the entire Vita initiative by contributing to its operating budget and providing dedicated in-kind staff support.

Stamford Hospital and Charter Oak Communities provide the essential backbone support to the Vita initiative, which includes program management, administrative services, communications and public relations, program evaluation, fund raising and strategic leadership. Vita Collaborative members represent nearly every discipline among community organizations including healthcare, public health, mental health, human services, education, food security, affordable housing and local government representation. Stamford Hospital also provides nutritionists, data analysts, and clinical staff to participate in planning and program implementation. Stamford Hospital completed construction on its new hospital and redeveloped campus, investing \$450 million, and Charter Oak Communities has completed nearly 400 units of mixed-income housing through its strategic application of public and private resources – totaling an investment of over \$200 million.

Each year, Fairgate Farm engages hundreds of participants and volunteers including students of all ages, corporate and civic volunteers, gardening enthusiasts and 'foodies', and numerous local residents. In 2017, the Farm grew over 4,000 pounds of organic fruits and vegetables, donating much of it to local hunger relief organizations. The Parents-as-Co-Educators program, designed to improve Kindergarten readiness for children of immigrant families, had a 100% success rate in its 2015-2018 cohort. This program has been rigorously measured through its partnerships with the Harvard Business School Community Partners and the University of Connecticut. A second cohort is planned to begin in the fall of 2018.

HOSPITAL DETAILS

Ownership: Private

Population Size: <249,999

Number of Beds: 300-399

Teaching Hospital: Yes

% Government Payer: 50-74%

% Below FPL: <10%

% Uninsured: 11-15%

Region: Northeast