



## **The Stamford Community Collaborative**

As a member of the Stamford Community Collaborative, our agency works with the Vita Health & Wellness District in Stamford, Connecticut, to help the people who live and work in the West Side community to be as healthy as possible.

Our efforts now focus on the two specific census tracts in Stamford (214 and 215) that comprise the Vita Health & Wellness District. This neighborhood is the first priority because it was identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment as having a disproportionate share of chronic diseases. The plan is to eventually expand the program to other parts of the city. By improving living conditions, including housing, access to health care, availability of nutritious foods, workforce training and planning public spaces for physical fitness activities, we are working together to create a healthier community.

The Stamford Community Collaborative, spearheaded by Stamford Hospital and Charter Oak Communities, includes organizations committed to the health of the community in broad terms, including those involved with:

- Physical Fitness
- Education
- Counseling
- Nutrition
- Economic Self-Sufficiency
- Mental Health
- Senior Services
- Housing and the Environment
- Obesity Prevention

### **Identifying Health Needs in the Community**

In 2013, Stamford Hospital and the Stamford Department of Health and Social Services conducted a Community Health Needs Assessment that identified four key community health priorities. These are:

- Health and Wellness
- Chronic Disease
- Behavioral and Mental Health
- Access to Services

These priorities will be addressed with a three-pronged action plan:

- **Improve lifestyle and social/environmental factors** that contribute to chronic disease and lead to preventable hospitalizations and unnecessary ER visits
- **Improve access to primary, specialty and preventive services** to all community residents to reduce documented racial and ethnic health disparities
- **Improve the coordination of care** among the hospital, outpatient providers, home care and patients to facilitate a more seamless connection between the hospital system and the community.

Community engagement is integral to our success. With sensitivity to differences in socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, our goal is to facilitate a vision that brings better health to all in a culturally competent way. The needs and concerns expressed by the people who live and work in the community will shape everything we do.

Representatives from our agencies meet every month, to develop short- and long-term strategies to address health disparities.

Additionally, three work groups have been established to focus on:

- **Access to Services:** Ensuring that all people have access to primary care, specialty care, behavioral health and dental care.
- **Care Coordination:** Optimizing the navigation of the healthcare system, including community-based organizations to address the physical, behavioral and social health needs of the community.
- **Healthy Lifestyle/Behaviors:** Engaging people in behaviors that improve their health and prevent chronic disease.

