



TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM of 21ST CENTURY HEALTH CARE IN CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HEALTH ADVANCEMENT AND RESEARCH TRUST (CHART)
UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION OF CONNECTICUT



So Near and Yet So Far

Connecticut has gained notable ground in health care reform since 2006. The work at the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut has advanced a transformative vision of how health care will be delivered and financed in the state. Ultimately, every state resident will enjoy better health and sustainable access to affordable, quality health care.

A growing number of residents and policy makers embrace this vision and the variety of state and federal initiatives currently under way. Many residents already benefit from the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA); however, spiraling costs and perverse payment incentives will persist even after the ACA is fully implemented in 2014.

An estimated 200,000 residents will still lack health care coverage under the ACA. Thousands more will struggle to pay insurance premiums and out-of-pocket medical expenses. Small businesses, the employment powerhouse of the state and the engine of new job creation, will pay more for less coverage than their larger counterparts.

To achieve long-term economic recovery and success, Connecticut must find a way to offer residents and small businesses affordable coverage choices that put patients first, focus on quality care, and result in better health outcomes. These goals must be reached quickly.

Connecticut will need to accelerate efforts to transform the current broken system of delivery and financing into a comprehensive system that promotes health, aligns payment with delivery, and spends our health care dollars effectively.

Strategic Planning Provides a Compass

Over the past year, the foundation; the Connecticut Health Advancement and Research Trust (CHART), our parent organization; and a cross section of stakeholders have examined Connecticut's health care challenges and opportunities.

We analyzed our progress in building a movement for universal health care over the last decade and anticipated the work ahead. We asked: What will be required for Connecticut to achieve quality, affordable health care for all? What role can the foundation play, in conjunction with our partners and constituents, to transform health care delivery and financing into a sustainable system?

With our mission, vision, and values reaffirmed, the foundation offers a new pathway for moving our state toward health care, improved health, and economic vibrancy.



Our Mission

To serve as a catalyst that engages residents and communities in shaping a health system that provides universal access to quality health care and promotes health in Connecticut. We believe that health care is a fundamental right and that our work is part of a broader movement for social and economic justice.

Our Vision

To achieve a sustainable system of health care delivery and finance that makes quality and affordable health care accessible to all Connecticut residents, and helps improve health.

Our Values

Prevention

Health care that focuses on prevention to strengthen individual health, communities and the systems that serve them.

Government

Government of the people shapes better health care and produces improved health outcomes, along with individuals, communities, and employers.

Health Care Equity

Inequities in health care and patterns of poor health are failures of our systems, not the individuals poorly served by them.

Democracy

Democracy, equal opportunity, and the right to organize are paramount values for people.

Leadership

Private and public sector leaders must play a role in achieving change.

Inclusiveness

The broadest spectrum of people and communities are actively engaged.

Gains Pave the Way to Solutions

The focal point of the foundation's strategic work has been to implement major policy initiatives that drive changes in health care. The result has been a solid record of accomplishments. Despite Connecticut's reputation as "the land of steady habits" and as the insurance capital of the United States, it has emerged as a leader in the progressive movement to implement federal health reform and to secure universal access to quality and affordable health care.

Building broad-based partnerships of consumers, stakeholders, and leaders from the private, public, and philanthropic sectors to advocate for change has defined the foundation's work. This approach has guided our strategies in grant making, in policy and research, in community organizing, and in advocacy and issue communications.

Our work culminated in 2009 with the passage of SustiNet, an innovative state health care law. The law, designed by a foundation-led team of national experts, was heralded as "historic" and "sweeping." SustiNet, described by national and local press, including The Hartford Courant, as "landmark," shaped the building-block legislation passed in 2011 and set the stage for current state reform initiatives and federal reform.

The ACA, which was passed in 2010 and upheld by the Supreme Court in 2012, requires that each state implement Health Insurance Exchanges by January 1, 2014. Connecticut is among only a handful of states taking the lead to establish a state Health Insurance Exchange. The Governor's SustiNet Health Care Cabinet, responsible for integrating state, federal,

and private sector initiatives, is also charged with exploring nonprofit alternatives to private insurance.

HealthyCT, a new private, nonprofit, consumer-governed health insurance option, received \$75.8 million in loans from the federal Department of Health and Human Services to start up and enter Connecticut's insurance market by the time the exchange opens. HealthyCT will offer an alternative to for-profit insurance products offered by the Health Insurance Exchange.

Other opportunities underway are public initiatives from the State Employee Health Plan, Medicaid, and HUSKY to deliver better care, better health, and better value for residents. These initiatives include providing enhanced payment to primary care providers to coordinate care and keep patients healthier, reducing dependence on expensive specialty and inpatient care.

Even as new federal and state initiatives are introduced, wide gaps in coverage, health care access, quality, and cost continue to pose obstacles. The current system rewards providers for increased procedures and visits rather than sufficiently support preventive care that improves health outcomes. As a result, patients often access expensive emergency room and inpatient care that could have been avoided with early treatment.

Residents and small businesses need affordable insurance choices, including public and nonprofit options, that put patients first and invest in quality care and better health.

Focus On People, Face Obstacles

The threat of ever-rising premiums, co-pays and deductibles keeps the Meriden parents of a young child with special needs awake at night.

Just as a Hamden accountant started a new job after prolonged unemployment, an emergency room visit revealed two forms of advanced cancer. He had not sought care earlier because he was uninsured. After a brave fight, he passed away, as medical bills he gambled to avoid piled up.

A Middlebury teacher receives multiple expensive procedures to open clogged arteries in her heart but is unable to get support to help her eat healthier, exercise more, and alleviate stress, all of which help prevent heart disease and costly, invasive procedures.

These residents' stories echo across the state. According to the Basic Economic Security Tables (BEST) report for Connecticut, released by the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, a Connecticut family of three (one adult and two children) with employer-sponsored coverage spends an average of \$500 a month on premiums and out-of-pocket medical expenses.

Meanwhile, a family of three without employer-based coverage spends almost \$1,000 a month. The 2012 tables present the minimum income requirements for the health and economic security state residents need to meet basic living expenses, such as housing, transportation, child care, and health care. The BEST report shows that our current system renders health care unaffordable for many families. At the same time, residents lack access to quality, coordinated primary care and health and wellness programs that would keep them healthy, prevent chronic disease, and manage health problems when they occur.

Private insurers, as well as those who are vested in the current system or are opposed to transformative change to health care, have sought to dampen public support for much-needed health care reforms. They have used well-financed campaigns to spread myths and misleading information. Many residents and small-business owners are either confused about or unaware of how the new reforms affect their lives. More than half (55.2%) of the small-business owners that participated in a foundation survey conducted last spring, for example, did not know that the ACA offered tax credits to help small businesses afford insurance for their employees.

Strong anecdotal evidence suggests that residents, policy makers, public officials, and health providers do not understand new federal reforms or state initiatives, how they can work together, and more important, what to expect as reforms are implemented over the next several years. This imbalance of power among consumers, patients and vested interests must be corrected.

Public awareness, active engagement, and public and private accountability have never been more urgent than at this critical juncture of reform.

Our Strategic Focus for the Next 5 Years

Our 2012 strategic planning and original research have unveiled the state's health care reform challenges and revealed solutions. We have a newfound understanding of our role and contribution to our state's future. By building on our experience and the strength of health advocacy and activism in our state, we are committed to achieving four goals to transform health care.

Transformation Goal 1

Intensify the Movement. Lead collaboratively with our partners and allies; with them, build our collective strength and capacity to achieve meaningful policy and systems reforms that result in universal access to quality, affordable health care; and promote health in our state.

Transformation Goal 2

Expand and Strengthen Partnerships. Cultivate partnerships with individuals and organizations whose efforts intersect with our work to find common ground and support common goals.

Transformation Goal 3

Re-energize Public Engagement and Accountability. Engage and inspire Connecticut residents to unleash their power to influence and shape public policies that affect their lives; hold public officials, policy makers, and health providers accountable.

Transformation Goal 4

Leverage National and Regional Resources. Build partnerships that elevate Connecticut's efforts to national prominence; and increase support for advancing state health care reform.

Overarching Strategies

These goals recognize the short- and long-term need to mobilize constituents and build power during the complex process of health reform implementation.

Implicit in the four goals are strategies that deepen and widen civic engagement, raise public awareness, and ensure the effective integration and implementation of federal and state reforms as well as initiatives designed to promote effective and affordable patient-centered models of health care delivery and payment. The foundation also can be effective in working with organizations that share our social justice values and are dedicated to economic recovery and future prosperity.

We will continue to work with our allies and co-investors to ensure that residents understand how health reform directly affects their lives, to provide reliable data and research to debunk misinformation and set a course for future reforms, and to hold elected leaders and others accountable to act in the public's best interests.

Focus for 2013 and 2014

The Universal Health Care Foundation has developed its near-term operating plan for achieving the goals set forth in its strategic framework. A major focus will be to conduct outreach and education regarding state and federal health reform. In general, the public is still uninformed about changes under way as well as obstacles that prevent access to quality, affordable health care in Connecticut. We aim to work with a wider group of people and organizations to deepen our relationship with existing supporters. Public education and organizing will also focus on ensuring that elected and administration officials stay committed to health reform. Outreach and engagement will include strengthening our social media capacity.

We will actively monitor the policy and advocacy arena, especially key reform initiatives such as the implementation of the state's Health Insurance Exchange. As a catalyst for the adoption of innovative delivery system and payment reform options in Connecticut, we will continue to conduct research and convene stakeholders. Health reform in Connecticut—the insurance capital—has national significance; therefore, we plan to bolster our relationships with national health policy and advocacy organizations.

The Road Ahead

As a living document, this blueprint recognizes the dynamic nature of public policy and its link to the rapidly changing economic and political environments. Therefore, it will be adjusted over time as needed, in collaboration with our stakeholders and co-investors.

We will define and sharpen the implementation details of our plan each year to account for the dynamic environment in which we operate. We look forward to keeping you posted, and learning your thoughts.

Please feel free to contact us with your ideas at 203-639-0550, or comment on our blog, Health Square, at <http://hub.universalhealthct.org/>. Be sure to like Universal Health Care Foundation on Facebook and follow the activities of our public education and advocacy outreach effort, [healthcare4every1](#), on Twitter. This summary of our strategy framework is also available on our website at www.universalhealthct.org.

