

# The Bulletin

By Chuck Seeman

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August 10, 2015 12:29AM

## Chuck Seeman: UCFS evolves, grows based on community's needs

United Community & Family Services has a great deal to celebrate during National Health Center Week, which begins today. At our locations throughout the region, we had a year of strong growth, serving more clients in more ways.

Working with community partners, UCFS has added new resources, including pharmacy services and school-based health centers, to better meet the needs of our clients and families. Our decisions are made locally and based upon feedback from our clients and partners.

Our sustained growth and ability to meet the needs of the community are due to effective long-term planning. Years ago, we realized that declining reimbursements from grant-based health care would not provide the resources necessary to grow and expand. Led by a board comprising clients, community leaders and providers, we chose to focus on a fee-based operating model in order to keep UCFS financially strong and competitive in a changing environment.

Insurance companies are merging and becoming more powerful. Hospitals are forming large health care systems, and individual physicians are forming large group practices. In the midst of this change, community health centers are being recognized as efficient resources for clients with diversified needs such as primary care, dental care and behavioral health services. A variety of services available from a single source makes access more convenient for clients and can treat all of a person's health care needs.

During my two decades as president and CEO, UCFS has become recognized as a leader in the delivery of health care services in the region. Our highly competent providers and compassionate staff work cooperatively with clients to establish care plans.

We are constantly improving our facilities to enhance the client experience. In Norwich, we completed the renovation at the Edward and Mary Lord Family Health Center. Our New London Behavioral Health Office recently moved to a new location, doubling the space we previously occupied. In Griswold, we are planning to break ground on our new health center, and we are beginning to look at options to expand our Plainfield location. Renovations have been completed at our school-based health center at Montville High School, which will be open when the school year begins later this month.

All of this growth and expansion has had a positive impact on the local economy. We are among the region's largest employers; we purchase goods and services locally; and we participate in teaching programs that are training tomorrow's health care providers.

Yet, despite all these accomplishments, many people are not fully aware of the number of lives that UCFS impacts throughout our region.

To improve awareness, in celebration of National Health Center Week, we have installed a flag display on the Norwichtown Green to represent every client we have served this past year.

There are 17,000 flags.

While that's an impressive sight, more impressive is the care that we have provided, the lives we have improved and the communities we have enriched.

To learn more, please visit [www.ucfs17k.org](http://www.ucfs17k.org).

*Chuck Seeman is president and CEO of United Community & Family Services.*



United Community & Family Services  
President and CEO Chuck Seeman.  
CONTRIBUTED

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