

The Bulletin

By [Jim Konrad](#) The Bulletin

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Jennifer Granger appointed as new President/CEO of UCFS

NORWICH - United Community and Family Services is transitioning to its new status as a federally recognized health facility, and it will have a new leader to guide it.

The UCFS Board of Directors appointed Jennifer Granger as its new president and chief executive officer on Friday. Granger, for the last four years the agency's chief operating officer, will replace Chuck Seeman, who is retiring after 20 years at the helm. She will transition into her duties starting Dec. 1, working with Seeman until his retirement in January.

"We have the organization in a great spot now," said Seeman, who will stay on until June 2016 as a consultant and adviser during the transition. "Getting the (federal) designation puts the last stone in the foundation. The organization has been relevant and exceptionally well received locally and regionally. Jen's leadership, our very capable management team and a great staff will continue the process of us growing and improving."

Granger will lead a staff of more than 360 employees at 13 locations throughout Eastern Connecticut. UCFS, with an operating budget of about \$25 million, offers a plethora of medical, dental, behavior and other services to more than 17,000 people in the region. In fiscal year 2014, for example, 58,235 visits were made for behavioral health services, 18,606 for dental services.

"She stood out because of her experience with federally qualified health centers," said Deb Kievits, chairwoman of the agency's Board of Directors. "Jen has had to work with all staff on different levels, with different challenges. She did very well with that, and her organizational and management skills are great."

Granger steps up at a busy time for UCFS.

In August, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services granted the nonprofit full status as a federally qualified health center. That paved the way for \$1.1 million in funding over the next two years that will be used to hire 24 full-time jobs, allow for a 34 percent increase in clients and help pay for a new school-based health center at MontvilleHigh School.

"(The designation) creates a lot of opportunities and a lot of new work we have to do," Granger said. "There are a lot of federal guidelines we have worked hard to put in place and will work hard to perfect in the next few months in anticipation of the (federal) site visit."

"The grantee status is another feather in our cap," Seeman said. "It provides access to more money and better opportunities. She's very well versed in federally qualified regulations. She knows a lot of people in the federal government that oversees health care centers. That's one of her many strengths."

Also, the agency is working to move into a 16,000-square-foot facility in Griswold. Bond funding is in place to get the project started and transfer services from the current, smaller, facility.

"We're working very hard to get additional capital support for bond funding from the state," Granger said. "We are hoping that will come through and enable us to complete our project."

Before coming to UCFS, Granger spent 17 years working with the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut, as director of clinical programs and COO. The association provides technical assistance, advocacy and training support for health centers, including those that are federally recognized.

"I was able to apply a lot of things I had coached and taught for many years," Granger said of coming to UCFS almost four years ago. "To apply them firsthand was a great opportunity. I've always admired Chuck, and worked well with them."

She also said she expects the transition to the top job to go well.

"It's absolutely definitely easier for me personally, knowing the agency and having a lot of established relationships, knowing how we work, and the culture," Granger said. "It should be helpful for the staff as well. I won't be someone they have to retrain and teach as well."

She said UCFS intends to quickly begin a search for a new COO, and hopes to have that person in place before Dec. 1.

Granger, who lives in Andover with a second home in Lebanon, is working on a permanent move to Lebanon. She is a member of the Norwich Rotary.



New UCFS President Jennifer Granger

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