

The Bulletin

By The Editorial Board

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Our View: UCFS deserves federal health center designation

This morning we add our voice with others in support of United Community and Family Services' [application](#) to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for certification as a [federally qualified health center](#).

Since 2002, UCFS has been classified as a qualified "look-alike" center, one of three in the state, making it eligible for enhanced reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid. But that designation does not do justice to the nonprofit. There is nothing "look-alike" about the services UCFS provides. UCFS is the real deal and it's long overdue that it be treated as such.

This is the third time UCFS has applied for the federal designation and we hope this time will be the charm. There are 13 federally recognized health centers [in Connecticut](#) providing the same level of services and it's time that UCFS was added to that group.

Qualified health centers are eligible for millions of federal dollars to improve facilities and enhance the services they offer. It is a significant accomplishment for UCFS not only to have provided much needed health care services to tens of thousands annually without that additional financial support, but to continue to expand its range in meeting the increasing demand for those services.

We have consistently pointed out the contributions that nonprofits make to our region and the state, and the increasing demand for services at the same time financial support remains stagnant or declines. Federal funds are available and every effort needs to be made to put those dollars to good use here in Eastern Connecticut.

There are roughly 800 centers applying for certification but only about 150 will be approved when the Department of Health and Human Services announces its decision next month.

We are pleased that Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy, and U.S. Rep. Jim Himes, D-4th District, are supporting the UCFS application, and proud to join with them in that support.

That's our opinion. We'd like to hear yours. Email us at letters@norwichbulletin.com

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