“Mental illness isolates people. Showing individuals and families that they are not alone - that someone understands their path - goes a long way towards giving them strength to move ahead to finding treatment. This is what keeps me coming to work daily.”

**Ginny Emerson**  
*Case Manager II*  
*CHL’s Youth Mobile Crisis Intervention (YMCI)*

Dear Friends,

Thank you. 2017 was a year of growth at Community Healthlink, and it couldn’t have happened without you. CHL celebrated 40 years of changing lives - and began preparing for the next 40 years - so we can continue to provide the highest quality mental health care, substance use treatment, and homelessness services in central Massachusetts.

In 2017, your support provided: more than 100,000 outpatient visits for behavioral health and primary care, and over 5,600 admissions to our inpatient acute care substance use treatment continuum.

Through your support of CHL, you made a difference in the lives of thousands of our neighbors, friends, and relatives.

You helped preschools and daycare programs learn how to teach young children with challenging behaviors and minimize classroom disruptions.

You provided early intervention to infants and toddlers with delays and speech disorders so that they can develop and learn to communicate with confidence.

You reunited families who’ve been torn apart because of addiction.
You linked men and women who have been homeless to healthcare services. You helped them find housing and jobs so they can maintain a more stable life.

You helped people of all ages who struggle with mental illness to regain their health and dignity.

In this report, you will read not only statistics, but also about the real life impacts you and CHL are making throughout the community.

Many of you, whether CHL clients, donors, board members, staff, or other community members shared your thoughts about why you support CHL and our work. We’ve featured a number of these testimonials on the margins of these pages.

My hope is that when you read this report, you are reminded of how important your support is, and that you feel truly connected to CHL. We couldn’t do what we do without you.

With Gratitude,

Nicole Gagne
President and Chief Executive Officer

“The clinicians, management, and staff of CHL are all mission-driven—this is not just a job—and they provide services to the most disenfranchised among us—from people with poly-substance use issues to multiple comorbidities who may be homeless. Given the difficulty to financially manage a behavioral health non-profit, CHL has stood out in expanding its services over the past 20 years and has been a leader on many fronts. I don’t know of anyone who does not have a family member, friend, or colleague that has some type of mental health or substance abuse issue. Like most of us, these issues exist in my family. So for me, its personal.”

John Shea, Esq.
Chair, CHL Board of Directors
The following individuals, foundations, corporations, and agencies provided financial or in-kind support to Community Healthlink in FY2017 (October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017):

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<td>Deborah Dedmon</td>
<td>Todd A. Keating</td>
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“If CHL were not in my life, I know that I would have gone back down the same road of drinking that I have always known... There is a great possibility that I would no longer be on this Earth due to my drinking and cutting... It is thanks to the great support that I have received over the years... CHL helps the people that others think there is no help for and turns things around and makes them into active and successful members of the community.”

**Teresa**  
CHL client
I donate to CHL because I know the immense value CHL has to our community. Without CHL, how many people would needlessly end up in the emergency room? How many people would die on the streets? When you serve such a vulnerable population you don’t always have the same type of warm fuzzy success stories as other organizations, but without CHL, the consequences would be dire.”

Linda Cragin
CHL donor
“CHL has been an incredible partner to the City of Worcester. I know we can walk into CHL and have someone respond to us and help the individuals out with whatever needs they have. When people come to the City’s Health and Human Services department in need of detox or help with mental health issues, CHL is my go-to place because of its Behavioral Health and Addiction Urgent Care. Providers in the mental health community in Worcester look up to CHL as the people who are doing the work. The comment I always hear about CHL is, ‘We would not know what to do if you weren’t here.’”

Matilde “Mattie” Castiel, M.D. Commissioner, City of Worcester Dept. of Health & Human Services
In response to the opioid epidemic, in late 2016 CHL opened our Behavioral Health and Addiction Urgent Care. It is one of only three opioid urgent care centers in Massachusetts. Our Urgent Care is open 24/7/365, and does not bill patients or their insurance companies. BHAUC is primarily funded by the Mass. Dept. of Public Health’s Bureau of Substance Addiction Services.

We provide assessments for clients experiencing addiction crises and connect them with the help they need, including inpatient substance use treatment (at CHL and elsewhere) and referrals for other services, including outpatient counseling, psychiatry, primary care, medication assisted treatment (MAT), intensive outpatient (IOP), and more.

At BHAUC, we serve more than 600 individuals each month. Our approach is unique because we have integrated behavioral health providers and medical providers to ensure that our clients in crisis can receive the care they need, regardless of the issues they face.

CHL’s BHAUC has recently been recognized by the RIZE Massachusetts Foundation, which is a state-wide, private sector initiative focused on bringing real and lasting change to those struggling with substance use disorders in the Commonwealth. RIZE MA awarded a planning grant to the BHAUC as part of its “Saving Lives, Improving Health: Redesigning Opioid Use Disorder Care” program.

Through the planning grant, our team is collaborating closely with emergency room doctors, police departments, and other community workers to enhance our ability to provide treatment on demand for those in our community who face substance use disorders. We are grateful for the support we have received and optimistic about the future of our Urgent Care program.

“If it wasn’t for CHL, I wouldn’t be here. I am grateful to be alive and I couldn’t be happier.”

Darleen
CHL client
“I donate to CHL because it takes a comprehensive approach to helping people in need. When helping young children, you assist the child along with family members and child care or school personnel, whomever the key people are in the child’s life, having all work together to be on the same page, in order for the child to succeed. To help adults, you assist with relationship matters, housing, addiction, and mental health issues – the major issues that trip up adults, causing them to lose jobs, housing, or relationships. People are complex and you design your services with that in mind, helping the person in the context of the totality of their life.”

Ann L. Flynn
CHL donor

Families and Communities Together

Part of the Families and Communities Together team in Worcester. From L to R: Mandi Robinson, Director of Intensive Care Coordination; Morgan Marshall, RN, Nurse Educator; Kathy Arsenault, Family Partner; Heidi Enola-Hinson, Intensive Care Coordinator.
Our Families and Communities Together (FCT) program has teams based in Worcester and Leominster that provide wraparoud services to children throughout the region who are enrolled in MassHealth and have serious emotional disturbances (SED).

FCT provides each client family with both an Intensive Care Coordinator and a Family Partner. The Intensive Care Coordinators facilitate care planning and coordination of services for FCT clients. The Family Partners are caregivers who have experience raising a youth with special needs. They help our clients’ parents or caregivers better navigate the child-serving systems, identify services and supports in the community, and support them in reaching both the child and the family’s goals.

Studies show that people with mental illness have shorter life expectancy and greater risk for major health problems than the general population. Some of these risks emerge in childhood. Children are especially vulnerable to the adverse metabolic effects of many psychiatric medications due to their developing bodies and brains. At CHL, we recognize that helping families understand the importance of good nutrition and exercise is one way to combat these risk factors.

With generous support from the Fairlawn Foundation Fund of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, we hired Morgan Marshall, RN, a skilled nurse educator, to provide all of our FCT staff with the knowledge and support they need to address each child’s physical health through wellness education and the incorporation of wellness goals in their wraparound care planning process. Staff confidence is high, and Morgan is now working effectively in both Worcester and Leominster to help increase the number of families who are addressing health and wellness issues as well as the mental health needs of their children.

“There are great disparities that still exist in our country today. Those who are less privileged or disadvantaged often cannot find good care. Places like CHL should exist to provide the highest quality care to those who can least access it. I believe strongly in this mission, and it is what keeps me going each day.”

Anthony Irsfeld
Director
CHL’s Families and Communities Together
“I work here to make a difference in the lives of the sick and the suffering. To be a hospital for the broken hearted. To show care and concern and love to some of the greatest people that may not see that very often in the world they live in. I believe in change and I believe in people. My heart has a longing to spread goodness in this world.”

Rachel Hazelwood
Program Director
CHL’s Detox

Our Programs

**Adult Emergency Mental Health Services**

**Emergency Services:** Assessment and screening for any person experiencing a mental health or substance use problem, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Based in Worcester and Leominster.

**Crisis Stabilization Unit:** Short-term therapeutic psychiatric treatment in order to divert or prevent a hospitalization or as a step-down immediately following a psychiatric hospital discharge. Based in Worcester and Leominster.

**Mobile Crisis Unit:** Mobile assessment and screening for any individual experiencing a mental health or substance use problem, or both. Located in Worcester.

**Adult Outpatient Services**

**BUDD Day Treatment:** Full-time day treatment for developmentally disabled individuals who are experiencing psychiatric illness and/or behavioral disturbances.

**Developmental Disabilities Unit:** Outpatient counseling, guidance, and life skills to adults with developmental disabilities, along with psychiatric assessment/medication management. Located in Worcester and Fitchburg.

**Fitchburg Counseling Center:** Outpatient care for adults with serious mental illness, including individual, family and group psychotherapy and psychiatric services. Located in Fitchburg.

**Geriatric Team:** Provides mental health and psychiatric assessments, consultation, and therapy to homebound elders and elders in skilled nursing facilities and rest homes. Based in Worcester.

**Leominster Counseling Center:** Outpatient care for adults with serious mental illness, including individual, family and group psychotherapy and psychiatric services, including office-based opioid treatment, as well as integrated primary care services. Located in Leominster.

**MISSION DIRECT VET:** A jail diversion program that provides manualized treatment to veterans in Massachusetts with co-occurring trauma-related mental health problems and substance use disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system.
“CHL provides services for a population that is sometimes ignored or left behind. Our patient base generally has high needs, with little or no ability to pay for services. However, they are consistently met with caring professionals in accessible settings. Many times, the service that CHL provides is the difference between life and death for people.”

Jessica McGarry
CHL Board of Directors
“Community Healthlink is a critical partner in meeting the behavioral health needs of Family Health Center’s most vulnerable patients. CHL provides tremendous expertise to support our patients with mental health and substance use disorders. The leadership at CHL is very collaborative which makes this partnership both possible and effective.”

Frances Anthes  
Chief Executive Officer  
Family Health Center of Worcester

**Homeless Outreach and Advocacy Project (HOAP):** Primary medical care (as a Federally Qualified Health Center), behavioral health care, office based opioid treatment, housing, and case management for homeless individuals. Includes a Tenancy Preservation Program to identify and resolve eviction cases involving tenants whose tenancy problems are related to mental disabilities. Located in Worcester.

**Programs for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT):** Helps seriously mentally ill adults who need intensive treatment by reducing hospitalizations and assisting them in finding jobs and housing. Based in Worcester and Leominster.

**Adult Acute Substance Use Treatment Services**  
**Detox:** An acute, inpatient program for adult clients that are detoxing from drugs and/or alcohol. Located in Worcester.

**PASSages:** Intensive, short-term residential program for individuals in the early stages of recovery from addiction. Located in Worcester.

**Transitional Support Services:** A post-detox program, the program provides stabilization services that enables clients to consolidate and build upon the gains they have already made towards their recovery. Located in Worcester.

**Services for Young Children**  
**Early Intervention:** Services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays. Based in Leominster.

**Together For Kids:** Provides behavioral health consultation and training for educators and families of young children. Based in Worcester and Leominster.

**Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative**  
**Families and Communities Together:** Provides Intensive Care Coordination and Family Partners to coordinate multiple services and provide support for youth with serious emotional disturbance and their families. Located in Worcester and Leominster.

**In-Home Therapy and Therapeutic Mentoring:** Ensures that families and their children with significant behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs obtain the services necessary for success in home, school, and community. Based in Worcester and Leominster.
People need help, not disgrace or stigmatization. Each and every life is of the utmost value and we have the important task of working to bring our clients back to health through treatment. Expressing heartfelt kindness to each person makes the individual feel valued and deserving of a better life. What we do for one person plants the seed for that person to go out and assist others who are battling for their lives.”

Marie Gagnon
Residential Counselor I
CHL’s PASSages

Youth Mobile Crisis Intervention: Helps youth and their families during a crisis by providing assessment, intervention, stabilization, and links to community resources. Based in Worcester and Leominster.

Children’s Residential Services

Highland Grace House: A 90-day residential program for girls between 13 and 17 years of age who seek long-term recovery from their addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. Located in Worcester.

Children’s Outpatient and Community Services
Youth & Family Services Outpatient Clinic: Mental health services for families and children, including diagnostic evaluation and assessment; individual, couple, group, and family counseling; psychiatry services and medication monitoring; and crisis management. Located in Leominster and Worcester.

Victim Services: Advocacy, crisis intervention, individual, family, and group therapy, to family members and loved ones of homicide; those who are victims or witnesses of domestic violence or community violence; and adolescent victims of dating violence, sexual assault, or gang violence. Located in Leominster and Worcester.

School-Based Counseling: Provides mental health services to students in need, along with consultation, training, and support to school staff and parents. Located throughout Worcester County.

Individual and Family Flexible Supports: Family Systems Intervention, Individual Youth Support, Youth Support Groups, and case management for families with children who have a serious emotional disturbance. Services include resources such as camperships, scholarships, respite, short-term placement, and direct assistance. Located in Leominster.

Juvenile Court Clinic: Serves the Worcester Juvenile Court, including evaluating the mental health needs of court-involved juveniles and families to assess service needs and consulting on mental health need for the purposes of disposition planning.
“PASSages was one of the best experiences I’ve had in recovery. It was exactly what I needed.”

*Kenny*

CHL client
The reason I give to CHL and feel strongly about it is that I have a son who is 50 who has a history of mental health and drug addiction issues. He is sober and working now, but his first hospitalization was back when he was 17... I was only able to find care for him when he needed it because I was looking in the right places and knew the right people to ask. I have no idea how most people understand the mental health care system, let alone access it. CHL plays a vital role in our community because it's an access point for people to get care and treatment they desperately need.”

Carol Seager
CHL donor