



Community Planning Council

The Community Planning Council was established by Greenwich United Way to encourage the most effective and efficient health and human service delivery system for Greenwich. Comprised of community leaders, nonprofit service professionals, Greenwich United Way board members, and community volunteers, the work of the Planning Council, particularly through its periodic Needs Assessments, has led to the development of some of the Town's most valued programs and institutions.

Community Planning Council Meeting Tuesday 4/17, 8:30 am, Nathaniel Witherell

Community Planning Council Tour of The Nathaniel Witherell

Allen Brown, Executive Director

Lynn Bausch, Director of Nursing

Scott Neff, Executive Director, Friends of Nathaniel Witherell

According to the United Way's Needs Assessment, the percentage of older adults is expected to grow significantly in the next five years and a large number of these adults will be low income.

Highlights from the Presentation and Tour:

- **History and Overview:** The Nathaniel Witherell (TNW) is a Town-owned skilled nursing facility (SNF) with 46 beds (all private rooms) for short-term rehabilitation services and 156 beds (18 private rooms, 69 semi-private rooms) for long-term care services. TNW's history dates to the early 1900s, when the Town was granted land and buildings to care for people with infectious diseases. TNW's campus consists of 3 buildings, the most recent of which was built in the 1970s. In 2014, TNW completed the \$27 million Project Renew, which funded an upgrade to its infrastructure and construction of a modern short-term rehab facility with private rooms. Other improvements since include renovation of all 87 long term care rooms. TNW continues to upgrade its facilities, with a remodel of its auditorium and a \$1.5 million project to rehab the public areas and bathing facilities in each of its 4 floors serving long-term patients.
- **Services:** Mr. Brown noted that 95% of its 650 admissions/year start with short-term services; however, some patients are unable to return to independent living so they transfer to TNW's long-term care facility. Its short-term rehab unit offers a variety of skilled care and rehabilitation services to individuals with orthopedic, cardiac, respiratory, stroke and other medical/surgical diagnoses. IV, wound care, medication management and limited psychiatric services are available to all residents, as well. Of the 156 long term care beds, 40 are devoted to specialized memory care. TNW has a mix of payer sources. Medicaid accounts for 55% of its patient days and, at a reimbursement rate of \$277/day, TNW incurs a substantial loss on these patients. These losses are partially offset by private pay patients (room and board rates range from \$555/private to \$528/semi-private), who account for 25% of the patient mix, and Medicare patients, who account for 15% of the mix. Commercial Insurance funds the remaining 5%. TNW is launching Witherell at Home, a joint venture with DanielCare Caring Choice LLC, to provide at-home care services.
- **Town Ownership:** TNW generates more than \$27 million in revenues/year and typically incurs an operating loss of between \$1.5 to \$2.5 million, which is funded by the Town. As a Town-owned, SNF, operated as a non-profit facility, TNW benefits from more than 11,000 volunteer hours per year. Mr. Brown noted that the BET recently completed a strategic review of TNW, which outlined several alternatives to Town ownership; this review is ongoing.
- **Outlook:** Mr. Brown noted that TNW faces a number of challenges. Medicare continues with a demonstration project that, if fully implemented, might fund services differently. In Fairfield County, there has been a surge in the supply of assisted living and independent living facilities, which attract private pay patients. In the State, the number of SNF beds has declined by 12% since 2004 and there has been a greater decrease in the number of not-for-profit SNFs vs. for-profit SNFs. TNW's occupancy of 93% exceeds the State average of 87%. Demographic forecasts predict that as baby boomers age and many develop dementia that there will be a substantial increase in the demand for long-term care services.

Next Community Planning Council Meeting:

Tuesday, 5/14, 8:45 am, Early Childhood Achievement Gap Solutions Launch Event, Greenwich Library, Cole Auditorium

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