

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

New Fairgate Community Health Center Offers Increased Access to Medical Services

Dedication May 14th includes launch of new collaborative health and wellness district on Stamford's West Side

STAMFORD, Conn., April 6, 2011 – Charter Oak Communities (COC), Stamford Hospital and Optimus Health Care (OHC) will announce the creation of **a new health and wellness district on Stamford's West Side at a public ceremony on May 14**, and **Optimus will formally dedicate its new Fairgate Community Health Center** as an anchor of this collaborative community-revitalization and health-improvement effort. The new health center expects to open its doors to patients in early June.

The dedication, which is open to the public, will be held at the entrance of the new facility at 138 Stillwater Avenue, Stamford, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Saturday morning. The ribbon-cutting ceremony is at 10:30 a.m., followed by tours and refreshments. Additionally, Stamford Hospital's Mobile Wellness Center will be parked near the Health Center on Stillwater Avenue offering health information and screenings.

Guest speakers at the dedication include senior executives from Optimus Health Care, Charter Oak Communities and Stamford Hospital, and Anne Fountain, director of the City of Stamford Health Department. The Reverend Richard F. Futie, pastor, Sacred Heart Church, will give the convocation.

New health center focuses on increased local healthcare access

Fairgate Community Health Center is an affiliate of Optimus Health Care, Inc., a Federally Qualified Health Center and the largest provider of primary care in southwest Connecticut. The new facility is a joint venture between Optimus Health Care, Stamford Hospital, and Charter Oak Communities.

The Center will offer acute, non-urgent primary health care services for members of the community. Fairgate clinicians will administer exams, diagnostic tests, evaluations and vaccinations. They also will provide onsite care for typical ailments such as earaches, skin problems and sore throats, and will educate patients in managing their diabetes and hypertension.

According to Ludwig Spinelli, chief executive officer, Optimus Health Care, "The collaborative effort between Optimus, Stamford Hospital and Charter Oak Communities will serve our clients and patients well. We are very excited that the new Fairgate Community Health Center will increase local access to a range of medical services."

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New healthcare district to offer range of neighborhood services

In collaboration with Optimus and the Fairgate Community Health Center, Charter Oak Communities and Stamford Hospital are creating a *Health and Wellness District* on Stamford's West Side. This new district – called **Vita** (Latin for “life”) – will attract an array of consumer-based health facilities and services along Stillwater Avenue at the doorstep of the redeveloped Stamford Hospital campus. This will include:

- **Fairgate Farm:** A planned and professionally coordinated communal farm, modeled on the *urban agriculture* movement (opening summer 2011)
- **Stamford Hospital's Obesity-Prevention Program**, in partnership with Stamford's diverse Obesity Prevention Task Force. Kids' Fitness and Nutrition Services (KIDS' FANS) is a community-wide collaborative program designed to promote smart eating, physical activity and a healthy weight among our children.
- **Other future health-related facilities**, which might include a yoga/Pilates studio, a health food store, juice bar, fitness and physical therapy centers, as well as private medical/dental or other health care practices.

The Vita district will be centered along the Stillwater Avenue corridor – from West Main Street to West Avenue – in an area that will see significant physical improvements by both Stamford Hospital and COC. These improvements, many already underway, include:

- The redevelopment of Stamford Hospital, incorporating a direct connection to the Stillwater corridor via a new south entrance
- The completion of the Fairgate mixed-income residential community
- The redevelopment of the existing Vidal Court housing complex as a combination of assisted- and market-rate rental housing, along with street-level retail space
- The demolition of several blighted properties, and the creation of other mixed-use properties.

According to Vincent Tufo, chief executive officer of Charter Oak Communities, the new healthcare district is a forward thinking and cost-effective model for enhancing neighborhoods through creative partnerships.

“The opening of this health center is another milestone in a series of steps now underway by COC and Stamford Hospital to provide residents with access to the healthcare system in new and innovative ways,” said Tufo. “We’re all very excited about Vita and our collaboration with the Hospital and Optimus. Additionally, Stamford Hospital supported the location of the Fairgate Community Health Center by funding its interior build-out.”

About Optimus Health Care

Optimus Health Care (OHC) is the largest provider of primary health care services in Southwestern Connecticut. OHC provides culturally sensitive, focused primary care regardless of income or insurance status. With 12 JCAHO-accredited medical service-delivery sites located in Bridgeport and Stamford, and the Town of Stratford, OHC

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provides comprehensive health care services to everyone, regardless of race, income and insurance status. Each health center strives to meet the unique health needs of its community in linguistically and culturally competent ways. OHC is a private non-profit organization including health care centers for the homeless, a walk-in primary care center, dental clinics, and general family health practice. With a total staff of 380 OHC serves an estimated 40,000 patients in Connecticut.

About Charter Oak Communities

Charter Oak Communities (COC), formerly the Stamford Housing Authority, provides attractive, affordable homes for thousands of Stamford residents comprising a wide range of demographics and needs. COC is a leading advocate and champion for innovative, creative partnerships that are redefining public-assisted housing communities in Connecticut and across America. Through visionary leadership, innovative financing arrangements, astute human relations and comprehensive partnerships with local, state and Federal government and the private sector, COC is replacing the aged models of public housing that often became a blight on cities with modern, attractive communities that are welcome additions to their residents, neighbors and neighborhoods.

About Stamford Hospital

Stamford Hospital is a not-for-profit provider of comprehensive healthcare services in lower Fairfield County and the region. The mission of Stamford Hospital is to provide, together with its physicians, a broad range of high-quality health and wellness services focused on the needs of our communities. Stamford Hospital is a member of the Planetree Alliance, a group of hospitals nationwide focused on patient-centered care. Stamford Hospital is affiliated with New York Presbyterian Health System and is a major teaching affiliate of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

For more information about Charter Oak Communities or the new *Vita* initiative please contact

Vincent J. Tufo, chief executive officer
Charter Oak Communities
(203) 977-1400, ext. 3305
VTufo@CharterOakCommunities.org

For more information about Optimus Health Care visit <http://www.optimushealthcare.org> or please contact:

Eric Stein
estein@opthc.org
(203) 621-3700