

CVS Health Zones Project

Charter Oak Health Center
Hartford, Connecticut



Charter Oak Health Center, Inc. started in 1978 as a small organization operating out of an apartment building and providing community-based primary health care to residents in the greater Hartford, Connecticut area. It has grown to include 17 centers, 25 total locations, and one mobile health unit, including a 60,000-square-foot building.

The CVS Health Zones team was interested in increasing screenings for substance use and behavioral health in the 06106 zip code and reached out to Charter Oak Health. The grant Charter Oak received led them to invest in a two-part training for staff.

They first created a refresher course on SBIRT – Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. These online modules were available for staff to watch in their downtime in their learning management system. All staff was required to go through this refresher course.

SBIRT is a simple screening tool used in the primary care setting to screen for certain numbers regarding substance use. If the score is high enough, someone from behavioral health might come in and do a brief intervention. This is where motivational interviewing comes in, which had been lacking and less effective after so many intense months of treating Covid patients and high staff turnover.

Charter Oak used the other part of the grant money to pay for the planning and staff time that goes into a one-time live event. In October 2022, the Vice-President of Behavioral Health conducted a day-long workshop to retrain behavioral health staff on motivational interviewing and remind them of the importance of asking good questions and listening for the answers to improve the connection between primary care and behavioral health.

With these two tools in place, Charter Oak hoped to have a universal screening goal of 6000 patients and an increase in the number of referrals.

**A project
designed to
improve the
way we
screen for
behavioral
health.**

2021 Health Center Data

- 18,073 total patients
- 91.38% racial and ethnic minority patients
- 55.66% of patients best served in a language other than English
- 24.74% of patients are uninsured
- 57.47% patients have Medicaid/CHIP insurance
- Special populations served: people experiencing homelessness, migrant and agricultural workers, and residents of public housing