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State Senator Rob Sampson, LiveWell President & CEO Michael Smith, & Dr. Miia Kivipelto Accept Governor Ned Lamont's Proclamation

Connecticut Celebrates Brain Health Day and Launch of the Nation's First Brain Health and Dementia Prevention Clinic

Southington, CT — January 29, 2026

An estimated 79,000 people in Connecticut are currently living with dementia, and more than 800,000 residents are at increased risk due to modifiable factors such as heart health, physical inactivity, social isolation, stress, and sleep. On January 29, a powerful message of hope and action took center stage in Southington: dementia risk is not inevitable, and communities can do something about it.

More than 120 community members, state and local leaders, researchers, clinicians, advocates, and individuals with lived experience gathered at the LiveWell Resilient Living Center to celebrate Brain Health & Prevention Day in Connecticut and the historic launch of the first Brain Health and Dementia Prevention Clinic in the United States, modeled on the globally recognized FINGER approach.

This milestone event marked more than the opening of a clinic. It marked a new narrative—one that shifts the conversation from fear to hope, from inevitability to prevention, and from isolation to community.

Hosted by LiveWell in partnership with Yale School of Nursing and the Yale Center for Aging Well, the event represented a major milestone in Connecticut's—and the nation's—commitment to brain health, dementia prevention, and inclusive, community-driven models of care across the lifespan.

The celebration included two formal proclamations declaring January 29 as Brain Health & Prevention Day, delivered by Southington Town Council Chair Paul Chaplinski and State Senator Robert Sampson, with recognition from State Representatives Jane Garibay and Mitch Bolinski, Chairs of Connecticut's Aging Services Committee.

The event also highlighted Southington's leadership through the Dementia Positive Southington and Healthy Brain Zone initiatives—efforts made possible by visionary philanthropic support. Development of these initiatives and the Brain Health and Dementia Prevention Clinic has been generously funded by *The Bradley Henry Barnes and Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust at the Main Street Community Foundation*, whose investment is helping transform cutting-edge research into accessible, community-based prevention and care.

Lived Experience at the Center

A defining highlight of the event was the powerful opening delivered by Empowering Partnerships Network (EPN) Ambassadors Betsy Mintz and Chris Burnett, whose stories grounded the science of prevention in lived experience, dignity, and hope.

Mintz, diagnosed with Mild Cognitive Impairment at a young age and now a member of the LiveWell team, shared how learning about brain health and prevention transformed her understanding of what was possible after diagnosis.

“When I first learned about brain health and prevention, it changed how I saw my future,” Mintz shared. *“Prevention gave me back a sense of agency, hope, and purpose—and it also gave my children and family tools to support brain health together.”*

Burnett, who is living with Alzheimer's disease, reflected on how advances in prevention science—combined with lifestyle changes, social connection, and opportunities for leadership—have allowed her to continue living a life filled with meaning and joy.

“Welcome to a new frontier,” Burnett told the audience. *“Brain health must be a hopeful, everyday conversation—at every age.”*

A Global Message of Hope, Local Action

Internationally renowned dementia researcher Miia Kivipelto, global leader of the FINGER model and a key contributor to the *Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention*, delivered a keynote centered on hope, action, and shared responsibility.

Dr. Kivipelto highlighted decades of research demonstrating that addressing modifiable risk factors—including cardiovascular health, physical activity, nutrition, cognitive stimulation, sleep, stress management, and social connection—can meaningfully reduce dementia risk and improve quality of life. She emphasized the significance of launching the first U.S. FINGER Clinic at LiveWell as a scalable, community-embedded model and invited participants to consider both their personal and collective role in advancing brain health.

What to Expect from the Clinic Experience

The newly launched Brain Health and Dementia Prevention Clinic is guided by Craig Manbauman, APRN, of Yale School of Nursing, and Jenn Terray, RN, Health Coach at LiveWell. The Clinic was co-designed with individuals concerned about or living with cognitive change, ensuring that lived experience shaped every aspect of the model.

Informed by extensive community workshops, the Clinic emphasizes empowerment, education, and partnership—not diagnosis. Participants can expect:

- A welcoming APRN visit focused on personal health history, strengths, goals, and modifiable “hope” (risk) factors
- An ongoing coaching relationship that supports motivation, behavior change, and sustained engagement
- Respectful and transparent information-sharing, including how health data are gathered and shared with primary care providers
- Clear, digestible next steps, including a personalized Brain Health Action Plan
- Meaningful and manageable options for tracking progress
- Ongoing learning and community education that reinforce brain health as a lifelong journey supported by connection and purpose

Terray noted that most participants to date are not diagnosed with dementia.

“This Clinic is giving people powerful, personalized information—helping them understand where their risk factors are and what matters most when making lifestyle changes,” she shared.

This co-designed approach ensures the Clinic reflects what participants value most: dignity, clarity, motivation, and real-world applicability.

From Science to Experience: A Call to Action

Following the main program, guests moved throughout the Resilient Living Center to engage in 10 interactive Brain Health Experience Stations, bringing prevention science to life. Stations focused on vascular health, fitness, cognitive stimulation, creative arts, stress management and sleep, nutrition, purpose, peer connection, and the 14 modifiable risk factors identified by the Lancet Commission.

Each participant concluded their journey at a “Call to Action” station, reflecting on what they learned and leaving with a personal commitment to support their own brain health—or that of their family and community.

A New Era for Brain Health in Connecticut—and Beyond

The Brain Health and Dementia Prevention Clinic integrates global research, APRN-led clinical care, health coaching, community and physician education, and lived-experience leadership within LiveWell’s broader wellbeing ecosystem—representing the first U.S. clinical implementation of the FINGER model.

“This event marked more than a clinic launch,” said Michael Smith, President of LiveWell. *“It marked the beginning of a movement—one where every brain, at every age, is valued, supported, and empowered.”*

To learn more about the Brain Health and Dementia Prevention Clinic, or to find out how to get involved—visit www.livewell.org