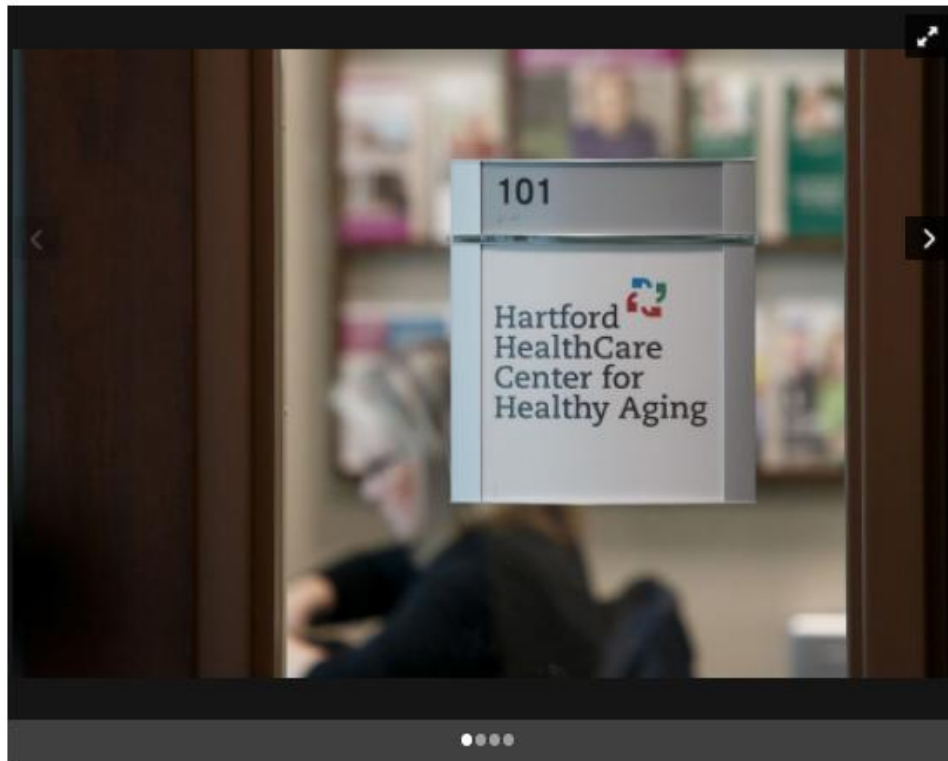


Grant allows Southington seniors free in-home health care visits



Hartford Health Care's new Southington facility offers residents multiple services in one location Friday March 9, 2018 | Justin Weekes / Special to the Record-Journal



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By Jesse Buchanan, Record-Journal staff



SOUTHINGTON — Hartford HealthCare geriatric specialists can continue a home visit program for town residents with the help of a grant from the Bradley Henry Barnes and Leila Upson Barnes Memorial Trust.



Doctors and pharmacists with the healthcare company's Center for Healthy Aging conduct assessments with seniors, helping them with their medicines, nutrition and other needs to help them live well in their homes.



Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation, which oversees the Barnes trust, said Hartford HealthCare received \$80,000 in December to continue the work this year. The company has been awarded grants for the program the past two years.

Like many towns in Connecticut, Southington's elderly population is growing. Sadecki said the Hartford Healthcare program keeps seniors in their home longer by bringing services to them.

Seniors are often on a host of medications, according to Wendy Martinson, Center for Healthy Aging director. Geriatric pharmacists have done assessments on patients taking 10 to 20 different medications. In some cases, the senior is taking medications to treat side effects for drugs they're no longer on. Not only do the drugs sometimes cause problems when combined, but the number can also present mismanagement issues.



Martinson said pharmacists will review what the senior is taking and write recommendations to their physician. One senior went from 15 medications per day to eight.

Some seniors are skeptical of letting anyone into their homes. Hartford HealthCare has been running education events to familiarize seniors with the in-home service, which can include telemonitoring for those recently released from the hospital.

"It still can be a struggle," Sadecki said. "There are some seniors living on their own and they don't want anybody in their homes."

Martinson said family members often encourage their loved ones to get an assessment.

"It's been slow to get up and moving, however, every story we've been involved with has been very impactful for the family," she said.

Martinson also stressed the importance of geriatric doctors in addition to seniors' regular physicians.

"It's really just like any other specialty. If you have a heart problem, you go to a cardiologist," she said. "As we age, our health really changes."

For more information on the assessments, call the center at 860-929-6829.

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