

FINDING HEALTH CARE FOR YOURSELF

CARE SETTINGS

Health care can be very fragmented, with emergency rooms for the episodic care of major problems, walk-in centers and 'minute clinic' for episodic care of minor problems, specialized occupational medicine clinics for work-related exams and injuries, specialists of all sorts, and of course a primary care practitioner for routine screening and preventive visits, for episodic care, and for longitudinal care of chronic conditions. Healthy young people, having graduated from the pediatrician's office, may neglect to obtain primary care services, and instead rely on walk-in centers for the occasional injury or illness. This is often satisfactory, but may lead to neglect of preventive and screening services, and, should a more severe condition present, leave the patient without a physician who has any sense of the person's overall condition. Hence the Student Health Service encourages you to establish and maintain an identified source of primary care.

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

The Student Health Service acts in many ways like an Employee Health Service. It performs an exam at the onset of 'employment,' screening for any health risks inherent in the new role, assuring that all work-related preventive and screening measures are taken, and counseling on any way in which the school may need to accommodate the special needs of a student. The S.H.S. performs a similar but briefer exam when the student prepares to enter the clinical years. The S.H.S. is the preferred responder for illnesses or injuries incurred 'on the job.' These might include exposure to potentially infectious body fluids through a needle-stick or splash injury; musculoskeletal injuries during patient interactions; or sensitization to chemicals encountered during schooling and lab research. Such care is provided at no cost to the student.

The S.H.S. is also willing to see students for illnesses and injuries that have no connection with their schooling. In thus functioning as a sort of urgi-care center, the S.H.S. will bill the student's insurance for its services. The S.H.S. is not prepared to offer comprehensive primary care, however.

You can reach the S.H.S. at 860-679-2893. It is co-housed with the Employee Health clinic in CG228. Take the elevators by the cafeteria down one floor and walk in direction opposite the labor and delivery area.

CONFIDENTIALITY AT THE S.H.S.

We keep student information private. Although our registration and scheduling are done on the system-wide EPIC system, actual records of school-related exams are kept in a paper form in locked areas in our department. We release information only at your request. After the initial evaluation, we notify the Dean's office that you are 'clear' for your school work, or will be 'cleared' as soon as some extra tests or immunizations are administered, or that we recommend special accommodation because of some condition, the nature of which is confidential.

Confidentiality of student health records is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, rather than the more commonly applicable Health Insurance Portability

and Accountability Act of 1996, or HIPAA. To comply with FERPA and assure the student of confidentiality, we maintain records which are not mixed with the general medical records of the University Medical Group (U.M.G.) which operates the health center's outpatient operations. When we order lab tests, we arrange for them to be reported to us in paper form, and not added to the health center's EPIC system. When we request diagnostic imaging, you are free to have it performed at any facility, with the report to be sent to us. If you choose to have the imaging at UConn Health, the images and reports will become part of the EPIC system.

The above comments pertain to the exams done at beginning of school and entry to the clinical years, and to care given for illness/injury related to your school. If you choose to see us for illnesses and injuries not related to your schooling, your care is documented in the electronic medical record (EPIC) that is shared by multiple departments with the University Medical Group, as would be the case if you seek care from other divisions of U.M.G.

SOURCES OF PRIMARY CARE IN THE AREA

Some students grew up close to Farmington, and already have a primary care source convenient to the campus. Others will want to seek out a new PCP. You can find this within the UCONN Health system or outside it. Multiple offices offering internal medicine, family medicine, or ob-gyn are in the area, and may be affiliated with regional hospitals or with large or small multispecialty or single specialty groups. If you wish to use the UCONN Health system, know that its physicians and mid-level practitioners are very happy to see students, and will often make accommodations to fit them into their patient panels and schedules. Your care at any of these offices will be recorded in the health system's EPIC electronic record, and your insurance company will be billed for services.

The largest UCONN Health primary care group is Internal Medicine Associates, with offices in Farmington (in the Ambulatory Pavilion), East and West Hartford, Canton, Simsbury, Plainville, and further afield. The Ambulatory Pavilion is also home to the General Internal Medicine Clinic. This clinic is the major on-campus training site for internal medicine residents, precepted by faculty. Most patients in this clinic are assigned to and followed by a resident, but faculty take on a limited number of patients whom they follow directly. Family Medicine is offered at our office in Canton.

For details about the health center's primary care providers, see uchc.edu/patients/services/primary_care/team.

If you wish to seek primary care outside the UCONN Health system, there are many free-standing practices in the area. There are also 4 large multi-site organizations:

1. ProHealth Physicians, with offices in Farmington, West Hartford, and elsewhere. <https://www.prohealthmd.com/>
2. Starling Physicians, with offices in Farmington, New Britain, and Newington. <https://www.starlingphysicians.com/>
3. Hartford Health Care Medical Group, with offices in Farmington, West Hartford, and elsewhere. <https://hartfordhealthcaremedicalgroup.org/specialties/primary-care>
4. St. Francis Care, with multiple offices. <http://www.stfranciscare.org/hartford>