



**Community Renewal Team**  
Changing lives... Creating opportunity!

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **CRT Gatekeeper Program Available to Help Seniors in Need**

*Problem Signs Could Lead to Long-Term Problems if Not Addressed*

HARTFORD—Sometimes the behavior of a senior you know may change in a way that stirs up concern. It's not always appropriate to call 911 right away, but still, someone should be notified. In the Greater Hartford area, Community Renewal Team's (CRT) Gatekeeper Program is now serving as that bridge between the senior and what might be needed to intervene.

CRT's Gatekeeper Program is one out of the four agencies providing this service throughout Connecticut. The program features the work of trained coordinators that take necessary and confidential information from concerned citizens. Then those coordinators follow up with the seniors to assess the steps needed to provide the help that senior needs, which may be medical, social or mental health-related. The number to call is (860) 243-3791.

The program relies on neighbors, family members, postal workers, hairdressers and others who encounter seniors in daily life. Professionals including meals-on-wheels delivery workers, residential property managers and visiting nurses who come in contact with seniors often receive education through the program about problem signs to identify.

A recent case started with a call received from a woman who was concerned about her neighbor—a man who appeared to be letting his hygiene turn for the worse, which was unusual to the caller. The CRT Gatekeeper Coordinator made a house visit and saw quickly that the man was having trouble caring for himself and his home. At this point the Gatekeeper provides the senior referrals to services and programs in which they may be eligible.

It was found that the man qualified for the CT Home Care Program for Elders and he ended up with a homemaker and the help from a home health aide that has helped with his quality of life in a dramatic way.

Gus Keach-Longo, executive director of senior services for CRT, believes that the Gatekeeper program plays a pivotal role in keeping seniors on a good path through daily life.

“Making these initial contacts with seniors who are struggling can help them avoid potential situations from which they may not fully recover,” Keach-Longo said. “The Gatekeeper Program is a quiet, yet powerful, way that we can all impact the well-being of seniors living in our community.”

The program began as a pilot in 2009 by St. Luke's Eldercare Services in Middletown and, since last fall, has been funded statewide by the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. CRT has run the program since April 2012 and has already had approximately 25 referrals.

To find more information about the program, visit [www.crtct.org](http://www.crtct.org) or call (860) 243-3791.

*Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency's mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life's Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families become self-sufficient while making sure basic needs are met. CRT's programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. [www.crtct.org](http://www.crtct.org)*