



WHATCOM COUNTY
**HEALTH AND
COMMUNITY
SERVICES**



UNITED WAY
Whatcom County

2025 Community Impact Grants Common Application

PART A: COVER PAGE

Please fill out this form completely. Note that individual funding agencies have specific grant requirements and will require supplemental materials. Please check the agency website below for details.

To which source are you applying?

- City of Bellingham’s Housing or Human/Social Services NOFA:
<https://cob.org/services/housing/funding-opportunities-2/partnerships-funding>
- United Way of Whatcom County’s Community Impact Fund:
<https://www.unitedwaywhatcom.org/help-for-organizations/>
- Whatcom County Health and Community Services:
<https://www.whatcomcounty.us/Bids.aspx>

Agency Contact Information:

Agency Name: Unity Care NW

DBA (if applicable): Click here to enter text.

EIN: 91-2168190 UEID (from SAM.gov): PFYXQLW32WJ6

Mailing address: 1616 Cornwall Ave Ste 205, Bellingham WA 98225

Website: UnityCareNW.org

General phone: 360-676-6177

State of Washington Business License Number(s): 602-160-891

Executive Director (or authorized representative):

Name: Jodi Joyce

Title (if not ED): CEO

Email: Jody.Joyce@ucnw.org

Phone: (360) 676-6177

Application Contact (If different):

Name: Tamara Tregoning

Title: Development Officer

Email: Tamara.Tregoning@ucnw.org

Phone: (360) 788-2628

Program Information:

Program Name: The Way Station

Program Address: 1500 N State St Bellingham WA 98225

Are all program services delivered at this address? Yes No



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Funding Request: The award amount is dependent on the funding organization. Please see individual funder’s supplemental materials for more information about the funds available.

How much funding per year are you requesting for this program?

\$ 50,000

Total Annual Project Budget:

\$ (without agency allocations) = \$1,183,733

Annual Organizational Budget:

\$ 50,761,648

PART B: AGENCY INFORMATION

Please limit your responses to no more than two pages for questions 1-5.

1. **Agency Mission.** Please paste or copy your agency’s mission statement below.

Imagine a community where all kids, families, friends, and neighbors have access to culturally appropriate and trauma-informed health care and can afford life-saving prescriptions, dental treatments, mental health support, and primary medical care. This is what Unity Care NW (UCNW) is helping to make a reality in Whatcom County. Our mission is to increase the years of healthy life in the people and communities we serve. We do that by providing affordable whole person care through medical, dental, mental/behavioral health, substance use disorder treatment, pharmacy services, and in 2024 UCNW added hygiene services for unhoused community members. Our sliding fee discount program ensures that the amount of money a person has does not determine how healthy they get to be. We know health happens outside the exam room too, so we provide additional programs and resources to live a healthy life. We connect people to other services for them to get and stay healthy, like food and housing. We believe that achieving health equity improves the health of our entire community.

Watch our General video about how Unity Care NW provides health care for everyone:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqdwCKy1dmk>

2. **Agency Beneficiaries.** Briefly describe the intent of your agency’s programs and who primarily benefits from them. Please describe your organization’s impact, specifying the number of beneficiaries or clients served per year and their demographics.



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UCNW is an independent Federally Qualified Community Health Center serving Whatcom County Washington with sites in Bellingham and Ferndale, mobile dental services, and school based behavioral health programs. Each year Unity Care NW serves 1 in 10 Whatcom County residents, approximately 24,000 people, of all ages, races, and ethnicities. Our patient population is primarily low-income, with 53% of patients living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) and 82% living at or below 200% of FPG. In addition, 10% of our patients are experiencing homelessness. Approximately 3,700 of our patients are best served in a language other than English. Our team implements a variety of translation services including real time video translation during appointments to ensure accessible care. More than 1,400 of our patients are not insured and 64% are on Medicaid. Here is a snapshot of our patients:

- 250 transgender individuals
- 328 migrants
- 695 veterans
- 2,562 elderly
- 3,683 members of the LGBTQ+ community
- 2,556 experiencing homelessness
- 7,786 children
- 13,248 women/girls

3. **Qualifications and expertise.** Briefly summarize your agency's qualifications and expertise (e.g., years of operation, accreditations, experience of staff members, and number of volunteers). Please mention any recent major organizational changes.

For over 40 years Unity Care NW has been providing health care for anyone who needs it, regardless of their ability to pay. With over 300 staff members, multiple accreditations (including Patient Centered Medical Home, Health Resources Service Administration (HRSA) Quality leader, and Advocacy Center Excellence from the Health Center Advocacy Network), and a dedication to our internal values Unity Care NW is well positioned to amplify United Way of Whatcom County's financial investment and create long-lasting impacts on our community. Unity Care NW currently manages multiple grants and government funding, such as our 330 grant from HRSA, and has numerous policies, workflows, and procedures in place to ensure compliance with all funding sources. In addition, the team leading The Way Station consists of long-term staff members, such as The Way Station Health & Hygiene Manager who has more than 15 years of experience working at UCNW with the unhoused population.

Over the past 5 years Unity Care NW has undergone several organizational changes including a new CEO and CFO, adapting and innovating during the COVID-19 pandemic, and opening The Way Station. Currently, UCNW is transitioning to a new Electronic Medical Record, and planning to expand services in Bellingham. Both are being managed thoughtfully and expertly by the Senior Leadership Team.

Unity Care NW has also been a Partner Agency with United Way of Whatcom County in the past, with programs such as our Mobile Dental efforts. We welcome the opportunity to partner once again on our new innovative and collaborative Way Station site providing health and hygiene for unhoused friends and neighbors in our community.



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4. **Racial Equity and Social Justice.** What steps has your organization taken to address issues of racial equity and social justice within your agency? Which steps are complete, and which are planned or ongoing?

UCNW is dedicated to achieving health equity by specifically serving communities facing barriers to care and those who are historically underserved. To ensure that we are reaching the populations who have been harmed the most by historically entrenched systems, our staff work at homeless camps, migrant camps, stationed in our local hospital's emergency department, participates in cultural and LGBTQ+ events, and UCNW provides school-based behavioral health services at schools with the most students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. This past November, UCNW opened a dedicated health and hygiene facility to serve the growing number of unhoused individuals in partnership with the PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center, Whatcom County government, and the Opportunity Council called the Way Station. During the pandemic our team launched a concerted effort to reach out to our BIPOC community to facilitate access to COVID-19 vaccines. This effort provided transportation and coordination for vaccine appointments and increased the number of BIPOC people receiving vaccines in our community.

Approximately 25% of our staff and 16% of our current Board of Directors are part of the BIPOC community. UCNW has formed an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Antiracism (IDEA) Council to address inequity. The committee is comprised of diverse Unity Care NW staff from a variety of departments and positions. The IDEA council advises our organization, ensuring that we are providing the highest quality of inclusive care and successfully serving communities affected by inequity due to race or gender identity.

UCNW providers receive extensive training to support treatment, documentation, and education to achieve equity in race, ethnicity, disability status, gender and sexual identity. The organization has adopted a set of values to guide our work: respect, accountability, integrity, collaboration, and innovation. Staff evaluate competence in living these values annually. We utilize video translation services to ensure equitable access for patients who speak a language other than English.

5. **Agency Funding.** List your organization's most significant funding sources from greatest to least (including the United Way, Whatcom County Health and Community Services and City of Bellingham); dollar amounts are not necessary. Significant funding sources can be defined as sources that make up more than 15% of your program budget. If you have many funding sources, you may list them by category (i.e., federal, state, foundations, individual donors). Please mention any anticipated or recent changes in your future funding or financial position.

82% of UCNW's income is from Insurance reimbursement revenue, 12% is from grants and contracts, 2% from private grants and donations, 2% investment interest, 1% patient payments, and less than 1% is from other. Regarding significant funding sources, UCNW does not have any one funder that is 15% or more of our budget. 14% of our total revenue is from grants, contracts, and private donations and of those the top funders for the last year include: HHS/HRSA, North Sound ACH, CHPW, and several smaller gifts from businesses and individuals. UCNW receives approximately \$12,000 - \$20,000 from Whatcom County in support of our Mental Health Court Case



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Management and Jail Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Assessment services. UCNW does not currently receive any other county or city funds.

PART C: PROGRAM INFORMATION

Please limit your responses to no more than two pages for questions 6-8.

6. **Program Summary.** Briefly summarize the program and its core activities in one or two sentences.

The Way Station is a collaboration between UCNW, Opportunity Council, PeaceHealth, and Whatcom County. It provides a safe and welcoming facility where individuals and families experiencing homelessness can receive a hot shower, use a restroom, wash their clothes, receive medical and mental health services, as well as connection to other resources in the community.

7. **Program Purpose.** Identify the community need(s) that the program addresses. What are the measurable outcomes that will result from the services provided?

The Way Station is a direct response to community need. In 2017 The Homeless Strategies Workgroup identified hygiene and medical services as a top priority of Whatcom County. This workgroup was comprised of community partners, concerned citizens, homeless advocates, and policy makers.

Approximately 10% of UCNW patients identify as homeless. Before the pandemic, unhoused people lacked access to primary medical and behavioral health care and hygiene services (showers and laundry). COVID-19 has made this lack of access even more acute. In addition to indignity, the lack of hygiene and sanitation facilities for individuals experiencing homelessness has increased the spread of disease and infections throughout our community. Making hygiene services available coupled with access to on-site healthcare and behavioral health professionals will enhance relationships, trust, and improve access overall. It is well documented that homelessness is associated with worse health outcomes and that marginalized groups such as LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC experience a higher level of homelessness. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention individuals experiencing homelessness are at higher risk of contracting infectious diseases such as: Viral Hepatitis, Tuberculosis, HIV, and COVID-19. In the short term, The Way Station will provide crucial health care and essential hygiene services for those in immediate need. In the long term, individuals will be healthier and will reduce disease spread in our community as well as access the tools and resources needed on their journey out of homelessness. UCNW estimates that annually 1,500 people will be served at the site.

8. **Program Status.** How long has this program been in operation in Whatcom County? Since your last application, have you made any changes in how you offer services? If this is a new program, how far along is your agency in the planning process? What resources has your organization already invested?

The Way Station health and hygiene program operated by UCNW opened in November 2024 and services have begun using a staggered approach. The first week the site offered showers, laundry, bathrooms, and case management. Medical was added the second week of operations and soon mental health and substance use disorder treatment will open to clients.



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UNITED WAY FOCUS AREAS

1. To support financial stability in Whatcom County, we have identified three funding priorities below, basic needs, economic mobility, and breaking the cycle of poverty. **Choose one category** below that best aligns with your agency/program:

Basic Needs

- Food security
- Stable, attainable, affordable housing
- Health and mental health care access

Economic Mobility

- Financial literacy and training
- Vocational readiness training and support
- Adult education programs

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

- Affordable child care and early learning programs
- Academic programs to increase student attendance and achievement
- Parenting support
- Addiction treatment and recovery
- Abuse prevention

2. Please describe how your program/agency services align with the category you selected above.

A Mission and Vision Committed to Health and Mental Health Care Access

All people deserve the opportunity to live their healthiest life, this is the vision of Unity Care NW. The mission is to increase the years of healthy life in the people and communities we serve. Unity Care NW (UCNW) provides high-quality, affordable, primary, medical, dental, behavioral and mental health, and pharmacy services. We serve all ages, 25% of our patients are BIPOC community members, and over 80% of our patients are struggling financially or don't have a home. Our sliding fee discount program ensures that the amount of money a person has does not determine how healthy they get to be. We know that health happens outside the exam room and the overall life and experiences of our patients contributes to their health struggles. The organization is based on the belief that when all people have the affordable care needed to live a healthy life, the effects ripple out to create a stronger more resilient community for all.



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Overview and General Information

UCNW is an independent Federally Qualified Community Health Center serving Whatcom County Washington with sites in Bellingham and Ferndale, mobile dental services, and school based behavioral health programs. Each year Unity Care NW serves 1 in 10 Whatcom County residents, approximately 24,000 people, of all ages, races, and ethnicities. Watch our General video about how Unity Care NW provides health care for everyone:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqdwCKy1dmk>

Who We Serve

Our patient population is primarily low-income, with 53% of patients living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guideline (FPG) and 82% living at or below 200% of FPG. In addition, 10% of our patients are experiencing homelessness. Approximately 3,700 of our patients are best served in a language other than English. Our team implements a variety of translation services including real time video translation during appointments to ensure accessible care. More than 1,400 of our patients are not insured and 64% are on Medicaid. Here is a snapshot of our patients:

- 250 transgender individuals
- 328 migrants
- 695 veterans
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- 2,556 experiencing homelessness
- 7,786 children
- 13,248 women/girls

Program - The Way Station

The Way Station is a collaboration between UCNW, Opportunity Council, PeaceHealth, and Whatcom County. It provides a safe and welcoming facility where individuals and families experiencing homelessness can receive a hot shower, use a restroom, wash their clothes, receive medical and mental health services, as well as connection to other resources in the community. Unity Care NW oversees the Health & Hygiene section of the site. The positive results of clients at The Way Station will impact the entire community with reduced disease spread, healthier friends and neighbors, and more dignity for those most in need on their path out of homelessness. Learn more about The Way Station here: <https://unitycarenw.org/the-way-station/>

3. Please provide two or three key outcomes you measure that indicate progress toward your mission. List the number of clients being served, what you track, and the most recent results.



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Agency-wide Measurements

There are a number of goals, measurements, and metrics that UCNW tracks in order to help our patients achieve their health outcomes. Here we provide a couple examples to paint a picture of our efforts to ensuring whole-person care and improved health.

- **Controlling Diabetes:** In 2021 UCNW had a goal to ensure that less than 22% of our patients with Diabetes had out of control blood sugar (HbA1cs). At that time nearly 30% of this group of patients were in that category. Our team worked on a variety of efforts from nutrition guidance, medication, life-style changes, counseling, and medical appointments and the work was so successful that we have now lowered our goal to less than 18%, which was achieved at the end of last year with only 17.9% of our patients with Diabetes experiencing high levels of HbA1cs. A huge improvement from the nearly 30% in 2021.
- **Annual Wellness Visits:** It's crucial for children to receive an annual wellness check and during 2024 the UCNW team had a goal to ensure at least 60% of all our patients aged 3-11 came in for their exam. Annual Wellness visits (WCV) had a massive decline during the pandemic and it has taken a lot of effort to increase the number of these appointments. The UCNW team worked on a plan to reach out to patients through a variety of channels including email, texting, and phone calls. New materials were developed to help patients understand and become increasingly comfortable with scheduling a WCV. At the end of 2024 a total of 71% of our patients aged 3-11 had come in for their WCV, a massive success.
- **Depression Screening:** With the increased need for mental health access, the UCNW team developed a goal around ensuring that medical patients are screened for depression. The goal is to ensure that at least 90% of our medical patients are screened. In January 2022, 86% of patients were screened, but in 2024 nearly every month experienced success of 90% of medical patients being screened and provided with resources for accessing mental health services.

Agency-wide Number of People Served

Along with providing approximately 11,000 prescriptions in our Pharmacy each month, below is the breakdown of number of patients per program and per location during 2024:



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Facility - Program	Patients
Mobile Dental	1746
Location Total	1746
Bellingham - BH	2235
Bellingham - Dental	9655
Bellingham - Medical	9546
Location Total	16383
North Whatcom - BH	524
North Whatcom - Dental	5772
North Whatcom - Medical	5607
Location Total	9782
Bellingham/North Whatcom Clinics Total	23609
Total Unduplicated Users	24748
Medical Unduplicated Users	13788
Dental Unduplicated Users	15946
BH Unduplicated Users	2537
Pediatric (<20 years) Dental Total	6577
Pediatric (<20 years) Dental Total including Mobiles	7755
Pediatric (<20 years) Medical Total	2061

The Way Station Measurements and people served

The population focus of The Way Station is individuals experiencing homelessness and chronic homelessness. Sub-populations will include youth, LGBTQIA+ community members, survivors of domestic violence, individuals struggling with mental illness or substance use disorder, and BIPOC community members. The Way Station aims to reduce the overall rates of homelessness in Whatcom County while also reducing the number of repeat visits to a healthcare facility, decreasing the overall number of dollars spent on high acuity healthcare settings. The following data and measurements are being tracked through the program:

- Number of clients accessing medical
- Number of clients accessing mental and behavioral health care
- Number of clients accessing substance use disorder treatment



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- patient diagnosis
- Number of clients who receive housing navigation services and the number connected to Coordinated Entry as a result of this intervention
- Loads of laundry
- Bathroom usage
- Shower usage

Below are totals for people served at The Way Station from opening in Nov to February 17:

- 562 - Total unduplicated clients served
- 2,647 – Showers taken
- 1,433 – Loads of laundry
- 2,505 - Restroom visits
- 375 - Case Management services
- 203 – Medical visits
- 66 – Mental Health, Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder appointments

4. How does United Way’s investment help meet the funding needs of the organization or program? Please give specific examples of how United Way funds are/will be utilized.

Restricted Funds and The Way Station Budget

It is important to note that as a Federally Qualified Health Center much of Unity Care NW’s funds and income can only be used for specific expenses and many of our services are not reimbursable through insurance, such as the hygiene services at The Way Station. This means that a majority of the funds for The Way Station will need to come from outside funding sources, individuals and organizations like yours. The total budget for the program is approximately \$1.1 million. The Way Station was fortunate to receive ongoing Federal funding support from both the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), but as mentioned above these funds are restricted to what they can be expended on at the site. We expect to receive some reimbursements from insurance for those patients who utilize this option, but this means that an additional **\$456,406** is needed to ensure the program’s ongoing operational success. Unity Care NW is estimating approximately \$299,258 in additional support of the program outside the department (such as finance staff, development staff, facilities, etc...). These funds are not generated by The Way Station so they are considered a net loss for the program but to clarify: these funds are covered by other agency income. So, while the total loss appears to be \$755,664 on the program budget, please note the only additional amount needed for the program is estimated at the \$456,406 mentioned above.



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Funding Request

Unity Care NW invites United Way of Whatcom County to fund The Way Station at \$50,000. Staff are currently applying for grants and conducting fundraising outreach to help raise the funds needed for the above-mentioned funding gaps. Funding plan including current requests that are pending:

Organization	Amount Anticipated
North Sound ACH - <i>pending</i>	\$150,000
City of Bellingham - <i>pending</i>	\$100,000
Other potential grant opportunities and individual donations	\$156,406
United Way of Whatcom county - <i>pending</i>	\$50,000
Total	\$456,406

Unfunded Needs

The Health & Hygiene area of The Way Station requires additional support for the unfunded/unbillable hygiene services (showers, laundry, and restroom facilities) as well as support for the staff to run the site. Hygiene is health. When individuals are unable to clean themselves and their belongings this perpetuates infections and lengthens recovery time from illnesses. In addition to building dignity and providing a basic need, the hygiene services also help to attract clients to the site, and this allows UCNW to build trust and rapport in order to connect them to a deeper level of clinical care including medical, behavioral health and Substance Use Disorder treatment services.

How United Way of Whatcom County Funds Will Be Invested to Change Lives

Unity Care NW invites United Way of Whatcom County to join us and help fund the on-going operations of the collaborative and innovative Health & Hygiene services at The Way Station. United Way funds will be used to:

- Purchase supplies for showers, laundry and bathroom facilities
- Cover costs of Intake Coordinator staff
- Pay for expenses for facility upkeep, maintenance, and repairs to ensure a safe, clean, and operational site.



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5. Briefly describe how your agency/program will utilize community partnerships or coordinate with other agencies (UW partner agencies, other community non-profits, government agencies, local companies, schools, etc.) to advance your work/mission.

Partnership - Always at The Center

The core concept and motivating factor to create The Way Station was to develop a unique, innovative, and collaborative site where multiple partners and agencies could provide a variety of services to unhoused community members under one roof. Current partners:

- **Opportunity Council staff** are providing housing navigation supports and connection to the County's Coordinated Entry System for housing on site in UCNW's Health & Hygiene section of The Way Station.
- **PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center** will be the source of referrals to the Medical Respite area of the site, once open this spring, and will be engaged with operating costs. Opportunity Council staff will oversee and run this section of the site.
- **Whatcom County** has provided the venue for The Way Station through their owned facility located at 1500 State Street. The County was the fiscal lead and project manager for the facility renovation. Both the Health & Hygiene and Medical Respite programs lease their space from the County for \$1/year in rent which helps to reduce operating costs. Additionally, Whatcom County has co-located Health and Human service programs, EMS, and the GRACE and LEAD programs on the 2nd floor of the building, increasing the opportunity for collaboration in service to this population.

In addition to the partners at the site, UCNW has extensive referrals and Case Management programs that include signed agreements with several local organizations to help connect patrons to the services they need. There may also be additional opportunities at the site to include local nonprofits for selected days to provide additional resources for clients at The Way Station.

Patient-lead Board of Directors – Important Partners

One of the unique aspects of a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) is patient involvement in service delivery. The majority of Unity Care NW's governing Board of Directors is made up of patients, serving as community representatives and making decisions on which services we provide. This active patient oversight ensures responsiveness to community needs.



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6. United Way focuses on ALICE households in Whatcom County. ALICE refers to households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level but not enough to afford the basic cost of living in our community.
 - a. What percentage of your program recipients are below the ALICE threshold based on the survival budget for Whatcom County? **100% - All clients in this program are individuals experiencing homelessness**
 - b. What percentage of your program recipients are ALICE (above FPL but below the ALICE threshold)? **0%**
 - c. Do you collect client data by zip code? **NA -clients are unhoused and don't have a current zip code**

Visit the [United for ALICE](#) website for the most recent (2024 report) Whatcom County data to determine the survival budget guidelines for ALICE households.

7. Please share an example of a client who was helped by your services.
**Note: if you receive a 2025 Community Impact Grant, this story may be shared on your behalf by United Way for the purpose of our community fundraising. Names and details may be altered for privacy.*

Unity Care NW has many stories of clients who have been helped by our work. Here we provide you with a selection of stories to help give you a glimpse into the lives of our patients and our dedication in helping to change their lives:

A Story of Dignity and Peace – The Way Station

A client using the hygiene services at The Way Station kept mentioning a pain in their back. Way Station staff worked to earn their trust and eventually they agreed to see the provider. Immediately The Way Station provider connected the patient to additional services at PeaceHealth where they found out that they had stage 4 cancer. The patient was welcomed into hospice care and one of UCNW's Community Health Workers went with them to get them settled. The patient shared this with our team, "I am so grateful that you were there for me. I'm glad that in my final days I will have the comfort of three meals a day and a warm bed to rest in."

Teresa's Story

This story provides insight in to why building The Way Station was so important and it also provides an example of the dedication of our providers and care team. Teresa is now a proud member of our Board of Directors.

- Video of Teresa's Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6KYFPF0hCo>
- PDF of Teresa's story - *attached*



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Garron's Story

What do dental cavities have to do with a life-saving kidney surgery? This story shares how interconnected health is and why UCNW is dedicated to providing a whole-body approach to care.

- Video of Garron's Story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14VZu-Ffadw>
- Garron's Story as told in a letter from UCNW Dental Director Dr. Carrie Shane: <https://unitycarenw.org/how-cavities-threatened-a-patients-life-saving-kidney-transplant/>