



# TEAM



## A Message from the CEO

Each year I'm impressed by the accomplishments of our team at Thundermist, and this year is no different. These results were

the product of a culture laser-focused on outcomes and motivated by a passion for community health. We celebrate these achievements with many valuable partners, including organizations serving our communities and funders who provide us with the trust and financial resources to further our mission.

In addition to serving the communities of West Warwick, Woonsocket, and Wakefield, I am proud of the contributions Thundermist leaders have made to the advancement of health care in the state. Members of our leadership team have committed many hours to state, local, and national expert panels, workgroups and committees on topics such as food access, trans\* health, Hepatitis C, substance abuse and insurance/Medicaid reform.

Here are a few specific examples of the impact we've made in 2015:

**GROWTH:** We completed our new 20,000 square foot Wakefield health center. The building sets a new standard for health care facility design, a hub for activity in the community, and provides much needed room for growth and expansion of services to the community. Following on the heels of this expansion, we received a one million dollar grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to expand our Woonsocket facility. We have already added 10 new exam rooms, and over the next 18 months will create space in our Clinton Street facility to collocate our dental and medical practices and implement design innovations to support our advanced, integrated primary care model. Finally, we opened a dental practice in Providence to serve patients with HIV/AIDS. This has allowed us to bring this critical, fundamental service to many individuals outside of our traditional service area and expand the impact of our federal Ryan White HIV funding.

**DEVELOPING THE PROVIDER WORKFORCE:** A common challenge faced by most health centers is

the ability to recruit a provider workforce capable of meeting the health care demands of our communities. To meet this challenge, in September we started a Nurse Practitioner (NP) Residency Program in Woonsocket. In partnership with Community Health Center, Inc., we have enrolled three exceptional NPs who will continue to care for our patients following their graduation in 2016. These NPs spend a year caring for our most complex patients

under the guidance of a team of experienced physicians and nurse practitioners. We have also partnered with the University of Rhode Island to train future NPs on community-based care and home visiting. These programs, in addition to our family medicine physician residency in West Warwick, are helping to solve the workforce challenges not only for Thundermist but for Rhode Island.

**HEALTH EQUITY:** We received funding under the Rhode Island Department of Health "Health Equity Zone" (HEZ) projects in all three of our communities. HEZ is the state's signature effort to reduce regional health inequities. Our team has coordinated the efforts of dozens of community partners in West Warwick and Woonsocket, and is a partner in the South County Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds HEZ. These projects focus on issues such as lack of access to healthy food and recreation, high rates of teen pregnancy, trauma, domestic violence, and accidental drug overdoses. In addition to HEZ work, we started a Trans\* Health Access Team to meet the unique needs of this small, but desperately underserved population. The experts on this team have not only helped to make Thundermist a trans\* friendly environment, but also delivered training to several other organizations in R.I.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Thundermist and our communities, and I hope you enjoy the rest of our 2015 Annual Report.

Warm regards,

Charles T. Jones  
President & CEO

**Our Mission:**  
Thundermist's mission is to improve the health of our patients and communities by delivering exceptional health care, removing barriers to that care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.



# Teamwork Key to Success at Thundermist of South County

From the sun drenched window of the “Yellow Pod,” there is a beautiful view of the Saugatucket River and the parking lot of the new Thundermist of South County building. “If you stretch a little, you can see where the old building used to sit,” said Anne Buchanan, nurse practitioner. “It’s the best of both worlds, a nice view and a reminder of how far we’ve come.”

When Thundermist of South County staff moved into a new building on 1 River Street in Wakefield, it marked the culmination of five years of planning and more than a decade of working in an over-crowded and rapidly deteriorating building. “It was not the best of circumstances for our staff, or for our patients,” said Nicole Quindazzi, associate vice president of operations, and project manager for the new building. “We wanted to create a new space that was inviting and open.”

The design team working on the Thundermist of South County project put a lot of thought into how to achieve an open concept, while at the same time creating a work environment based on best practices in patient care. The result is the innovative “Pod Model” which brings together a team consisting of a physician, nurse practitioner, nurse manager, behavioral health clinician, and medical assistants into a shared space. There are four pods in the new building, each painted in a different, lively, pastel color.

In the pod, the team works together to optimize communication and patient care. “It gives us an opportunity to huddle in the morning and discuss who is coming in and anticipate what each patient may need,” said Dr. Cristina McCormick. “There may be a patient who needs a consult with a behavioral health clinician or who may need a little extra time from me. It makes for a much better scenario than when we were scattered all over the old building.”

*Members of the Yellow Pod Team include: Cristina McCormick, MD, Denise Beauchamp, Bambi Watkins, Jessica Oatley, RN, Anne Buchanan, NP. Not pictured: Elizabeth Carter, MA, LMHC, Nicole Falcon.*

One example of how the new model benefits everyone happened recently when a patient reported to her behavioral health clinician, Elizabeth Carter, LMHC, that she was experiencing a myriad of medical problems. “She wasn’t comfortable conveying them to her provider, so I had her write down a list of her symptoms to help her remember. Between appointments I was able to tell her NP, Anne Buchanan, what she was experiencing and let her know that the patient had a list,” said Elizabeth. When the patient met with Anne, she again didn’t convey her symptoms, but Anne was able to ask her about the list. The result was an open dialogue between the patient and her primary care provider. “These types of scenarios are perfect examples of how the pod model benefits us all,” said Anne. “I was able to communicate with my teammates and the patient got the care she needed.”

The benefits of the new building do not end with the pod model. “Overall, everyone’s anxiety is reduced,” said Nicole Falcon, one of the medical assistants in the pod. “Staff is more relaxed and productive, and patients are happy to get their care in a beautiful building with teams who are dedicated to their care and well being.”

**The design team working on the Thundermist of South County project put a lot of thought into how to achieve an open concept, while at the same time creating a work environment based on best practices in patient care.**





Thundermist is extremely proud to have a team of highly qualified professionals leading our physicians and dentists at our Woonsocket, West Warwick and South County sites. Under the direction of David Bourassa, MD and Eric Prosseda, DMD, our dedicated team of medical and dental providers serve more than 40,000 patients each year.

**SPOTLIGHT:**



**Sapna Chowdhry, MD**, Medical Director, Woonsocket

Armed Forces Medical College, Boston University School of Medicine

Residency: Boston University School of Medicine

Dr. Chowdhry recently celebrated her 11th year with Thundermist. In the past year, since being appointed the Woonsocket Medical Director, Dr. Chowdhry has led her team through multiple transitions, including the beginnings of the Nurse Practitioner Residency Program and the on-boarding of several new providers. Dr. Chowdhry was recently appointed as a Clinical Instructor in Medicine at Brown University School of Medicine.



**David Bourassa, MD**

Thundermist Chief Medical Officer

Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Residency: The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Pediatric Residency Program

Dr. Bourassa oversees all aspects of the Thundermist medical team.



**Eric Prosseda, DMD**

Thundermist Dental Director & Dental Director, South County

University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine

Dr. Prosseda oversees all aspects of Thundermist's Dental program.



**Michael Poshkus, MD**

Medical Director, West Warwick

Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons

Residency: Brown University General Internal Medicine



**Christopher Klaus, MD**

Medical Director, South County University of Iowa

Residency: Brown University Family Medicine



**Maulik Kotdawala, DMD**

Dental Director, Woonsocket

Tufts University School of Dental Medicine



**Danielle Cummings, DMD**

Dental Director, West Warwick

Boston University School of Dental Medicine

Residency: University of Virginia

# For West Warwick Town Leadership, Health Equity is a Community Concern

When the Rhode Island Department of Health created the Health Equity Zones (HEZ), their vision was that citizens, local groups, and leaders would come together to solve health disparities that plague communities. Thundermist, which became the backbone agency to the HEZ in West Warwick and Woonsocket, has long been committed to these issues, but HEZ gave them a platform. “Creation of the HEZ gave us the opportunity to put together a team of community members to formalize and enhance the work we’ve been doing in the community. Health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to attain their full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of their social or economic circumstances,” said Susan Jacobsen, LMHC, director of Health Equity Initiatives at Thundermist.

With huge challenges to tackle in West Warwick, such as improving access to healthy food, increasing physical activity, building a trauma informed community, improving teen health and pregnancy prevention, drug overdose/addiction prevention, and promoting recovery and wellness, it was critical to incorporate key community members, the town, and local organizations in formulating and implementing an action plan.

“The Town of West Warwick has been a huge supporter of the HEZ. We’re lucky to have them as partners,” said Jacobsen. On a crisp afternoon in January, leaders from the Town of West Warwick, including: Fred Presley, town manager; Colonel Richard Silva, chief of police; Karen Tarasevich, superintendent of public schools; and Manuel Murray, Senior Center president and CEO and director of human services, got together to share their thoughts about the collaboration with HEZ.

“It’s a good opportunity to work with other groups and deal with issues on a broader basis. These partnerships are helping citizens who need services. Our residents now have multiple points of entry to obtain aid and can approach those that they feel most comfortable with for help. Our partners are connected to a whole network that’s really helping the community to communicate,” said Mr. Presley.



*Fred Presley, town manager; Colonel Richard Silva, chief of police; Karen Tarasevich, school department superintendent; and Manuel Murray, Senior Center president and CEO and director of human services.*

One of the critical issues addressed by the HEZ is the opioid epidemic that is prevalent in our state. Naloxone training for all West Warwick police officers and for the public was one of the first initiatives carried out by the HEZ. “We’re saving lives with use of Naloxone. Anchor Recovery and HEZ have been great in getting our residents access to the proper resources for recovery,” said Silva. Naloxone (brand name Narcan) is a medication that can reverse a potentially fatal opioid overdose.

This collaboration of partners is also helping kids and families in our community. “The collaboration with HEZ and its partners is helping us to support our citizens in a real wrap-around way,” said Tarasevich. “It’s provided a forum and dedicated time to work through issues and spawned conversations between different agencies.”

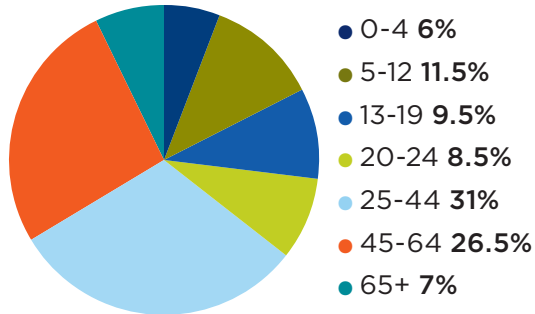
“Yet another problem in our community is food insecurity,” said Manuel Murray. “The HEZ collaboration has helped us figure out new and better ways to do what we do. Communication has improved within the community, and we’re able to leverage the resources of other groups.” HEZ facilitated pop-up farmers markets at the senior center and the schools conducted food drives, which provided holiday food bundles to seniors in need.

“The community in West Warwick is strong; it’s filled with concerned citizens and parents, advocates, municipal and community leaders that want to see change,” said Victor Arias, West Warwick HEZ program manager at Thundermist. “We’ve made some great headway in less than a year, and we look forward to the future.”

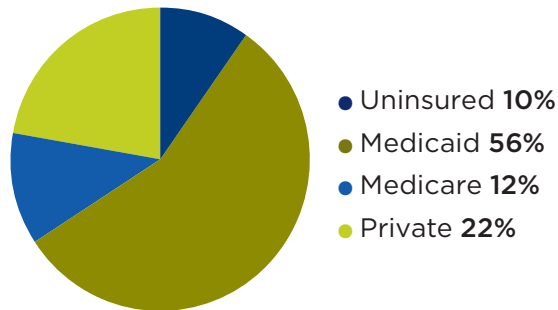
**Health Equity Zone**  
West Warwick

# 2015 Thundermist Health

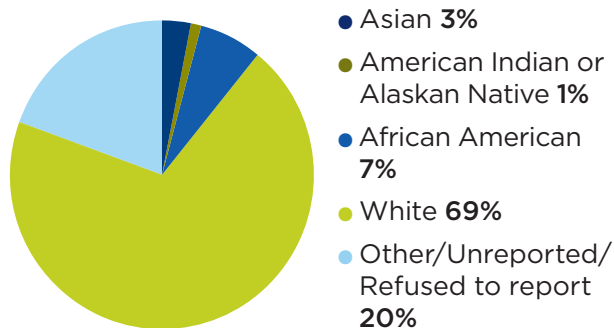
## Patients by Age



## Patient Insurance Status

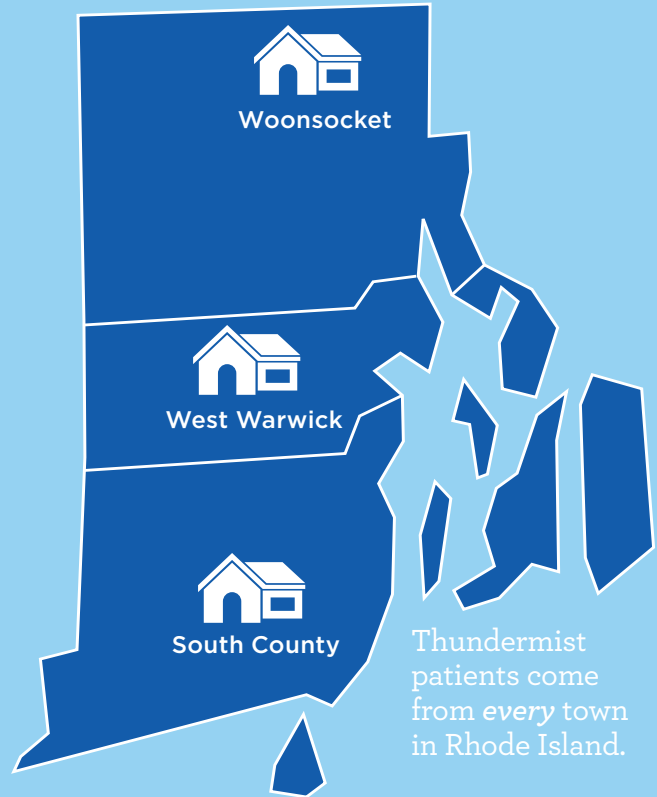


## Patient Diversity



16% of Thundermist patients are Hispanic

## Thundermist Health Center locations



### PATIENTS SERVED

2015

**Total Patients 42,024**

### VISITS BY SERVICE

Medical	115,159
Dental	44,723
Behavioral Health	20,178
Case Management & Education	11,060
Nutrition	1,151
<b>Total Visits</b>	<b>192,271</b>

### PATIENTS SERVED BY SITE

South County	8,681
Woonsocket	17,802
West Warwick	16,224

# Health Center Quick Facts



**247**

Pediatric patient  
visits with an  
Asthma Educator



**107**

Participants in the  
Trans\* Health Access  
Program



**425**

Employees



**16,249**

QuickCare visits



**4,482**

Patients served by  
Women, Infants and  
Children (WIC) Program



**831**

Patients served by  
the Healthcare for the  
Homeless Program



**2,497**

High risk patients  
served by the Integrated  
Care Management Team\*



**343,835**

Calls answered  
by the Call Center



**2,576**

Patients served by  
Community Dental  
Programs

\* Integrated Care Management includes Nurse Care Managers and Community Health Teams



# Trans\* Health Access Team: Working Together for a Healthier Community

In spring of 2015, Thundermist Health Center started a Trans\* Health Access Team. “There was a strong desire for us to start a program,” said Lauren Nocera, associate vice president of program development. “We were getting requests from our providers, staff, patients and community partners, all wanting to improve access to primary care for trans\* people in Rhode Island.” The first step towards building a successful program was to hire Jayeson Watts, LCSW, as the Trans\* Health program manager. “He comes to us with a strong background in advocating for underserved groups, including the transgender community,” continued Nocera.

The first thing on Jaye’s task list was to train staff across all departments to work as a team, to support one another and our trans\* patients. “From our call center, to our billing department, to our providers and medical assistants, everyone has now been trained. At every touchpoint our staff sees the importance of this program’s mission and is committed to doing the right thing and making trans\* patients feel welcome,” stated Watts.

While all Thundermist providers have received basic training, nine providers across all three sites have received more intensive training and are currently a part of the Trans\* Health Access Team. The team includes: Sara Watson, MD, Maeve Bennett, NP, Anna Filip, MD, Vanessa Fowlkes, NP, Erin Wisman, MD, Meghan Grant, MD, Linda Berman, MD, Kristen Goad, NP, and Heather Orton, NP.

“Receiving care from the Trans\* Health Access Team has been a really good and positive experience,” said Elliott Buelter, a patient of Dr. Filip. “When I moved here from North Carolina, I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to find a provider in Rhode Island who was as knowledgeable about trans\* issues as the doctor I had back home.

Dr. Filip has exceeded my expectations.



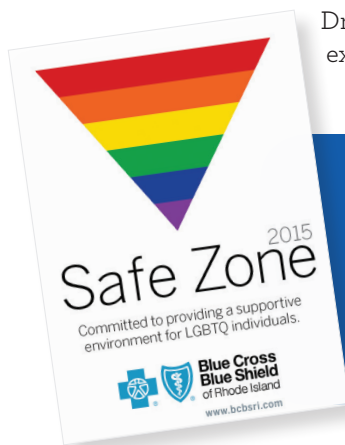
*Jaye Watts and Elliott Buelter attend the Trans\* Health Conference at Rhode Island College*

I’ve also had the opportunity to work with the team through my MSW training; watching them work together to meet the specific and individualized needs of each patient is unique and awe-inspiring.”

“Being a patient in the Trans\* Health Access Program is like being a patient in any of our other programs,” said Watts. “We’re just able to make sure that the patient is seeing someone who is trained and comfortable in treating gender related needs, as well as other medical needs.”

The trans\* patient population at Thundermist has more than doubled since the program started. To give participants opportunities to improve their health and wellness, we are adding support groups and community activities, such as swimming and bowling.

The team is committed to providing the best care possible to everyone who walks through the doors and helping them to feel safe throughout the process. “Playing a bigger role in helping individuals on this journey has been a great privilege,” said Watts. “I enjoy being a part of a team that helps make people feel comfortable and supported.”



Blue Cross Blue Shield of RI has designated Thundermist Health Center of Woonsocket, West Warwick, and Wakefield as LGBTQ Safe Zones! We are proud to be the first health facility in RI to receive this recognition.

We received this designation based on our competency in caring for LGBTQ individuals and our commitment to supporting the community. We strive to create health care environments free of homophobia, heterosexism, and transphobia.



# Community Health Teams: Providing Support When and Where Our Patients Need Us

After years of guiding others on trips across the globe that took him from Australia to the tropics, it's hard to imagine Joe Norton was having difficulty navigating everyday life. Last year, Mr. Norton was losing chunks of time out of his day. He was having black-out episodes when he couldn't remember where he had been, whether he had taken his medications, and, on one occasion, he couldn't remember how he had gotten to the grocery store. He began to realize he needed a guide of his own.

Dr. Meghan Grant and Diana Cote, community health worker, began the task of hashing out Joe's needs. They discovered that part of his difficulties stemmed from accidentally missing his medication doses and, other times, over medicating. They decided to try pill packs, but sometimes he couldn't remember if he had taken his medications, so he would take them again. They had a nurse coming in during the day to help manage his care, but with the dizziness and black-out episodes, they were concerned for his safety. It was then that they realized he needed more specialized care. Diana, who is a member of Thundermist's Community Health Team (CHT), and Joe toured a couple of assisted living facilities before finding one that best fit his needs.

The daily structure at his new home has helped Mr. Norton gain his health and some independence. Now that he is thriving in his new space, the CHT can focus on Joe's long-term needs and health goals, such as getting to the root of his memory loss and dizziness. They arranged for Mr. Norton to see a neurologist who discovered that he has had a number of mini strokes. The strokes caused the memory blips which lead to Mr. Norton's medication troubles. They'll continue to follow that through with his specialists.

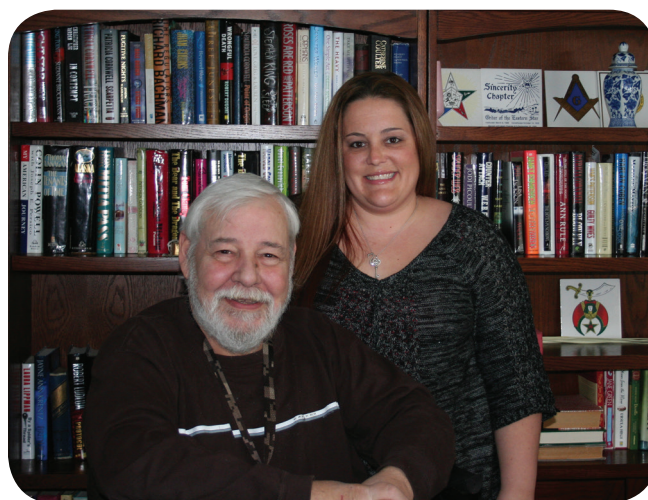
Diana accompanies Joe to all of his appointments, whether it's the eye doctor, the podiatrist, or the neurologist, and takes notes so that she can confer with Dr. Grant. This coordination of care ensures that all of the patient's needs are met and that all of the providers are on the same page. Each patient has different needs; but

for Mr. Norton, one of the most important things Diana did was to help him get qualified for a different type of insurance that would aid in paying for assisted living. This change was integral to Joe's health. "Without her, I wouldn't be sitting here today", said Mr. Norton. "I still don't know why I was double taking my meds, but what I was doing was dangerous. She saved my life."

**"Without her, I wouldn't be sitting here today", said Mr. Norton. "I still don't know why I was double taking my meds, but what I was doing was dangerous. She saved my life."**

"We teach patients ways to be independent by letting them know about resources.

We assist them in making the connections and then slowly help them take the steps toward utilizing those resources on their own," said Diana. "Helping patients find a sense of independence is incredibly rewarding; I love what I do." The CHT helps patients, who would otherwise be unable, to execute care plans suggested by their primary care providers. Patients with well-controlled chronic conditions are healthier and, as a result, tend to have a better quality of life. But these outcomes aren't the only benefits of Community Health Teams. Higher patient engagement reduces the number of missed appointments and emergency room visits, which lead to reduced healthcare costs.



*Mr. Norton and Diana Cote, Community Health Worker*

# Thundermist 2015 Events



## Moonlight at the Dunes

Nearly \$60,000 was raised at Thundermist's signature fundraising event Moonlight at the Dunes on Friday, June 19. The Dunes Club on Narragansett Beach and its sprawling sea view was the backdrop as guests dined and perused the silent auction. The music of Nancy Paolino and the Black Tie Band whisked along the warm summer breeze and guests danced the night away.



## Thundermist Golf Tournament

At Sakonnet Golf Club in Little Compton, ninety-six golfers took to the green for Thundermist's 10th Annual Golf Tournament, raising \$26,000! Back at the clubhouse, golfers enjoyed refreshments, a sports memorabilia auction, and a lively conversation about one (winning) member's choice of footwear.



## Annual Duck Race

More than 3,000 rubber ducks waddled their way down to the finish line at the Royal Mills River Point in West Warwick. When a hurricane threatened to run the race aground on October 3, the Annual Duck Race fundraiser was rescheduled to Saturday, October 24. Over 300 members of the community gathered on a crisp fall afternoon to enjoy good food, free family-centered activities, crafts, and dancing. Over \$7,000 was raised to benefit the programs and services at Thundermist.



## 2016 Save the Dates

**Friday, June 10, 2016**

Moonlight at the Dunes, Dunes Club, Narragansett

**Tuesday, September 20, 2016**

Thundermist Golf Tournament, Sakonnet Golf Club, Little Compton

**Saturday, October 8, 2016**

Annual Duck Race, Royal Mills Riverpoint, West Warwick

## 2015 Financial Highlights

### Sources of Revenue

- Bureau of Primary Health Care Grants: **\$4,273,271**
- Medicaid, Medicare, Insurances, Patient Payments: **\$29,511,947**
- Grants and Contracts: **\$2,770,557**
- Rental Income, Fundraising, Other: **\$829,607**
- TOTAL AMOUNT: **\$37,385,382**

# Donors January 1 - December 31, 2015

## Thundermist is grateful for the generosity of our donors.

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Chief Medical Officer

Jeanne LaChance  
Chief Administrative/Financial  
Officer

Matthew Roman, LICSW  
Chief Operating Officer

Diane Evans  
Associate Vice President  
Strategic Projects

Cynthia Farrell  
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David Valois  
Charles Jones,  
President/CEO, Ex-Officio

### THUNDERMIST HEALTH CENTER OF WOONSOCKET

Medical:  
450 Clinton Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895  
(401) 767-4100

Dental and WIC:  
191 Social Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895  
Dental (401) 767-4161  
WIC (401) 767-4109

### THUNDERMIST HEALTH CENTER OF SOUTH COUNTY

Medical, Dental and WIC:  
1 River Street  
Wakefield, RI 02879  
Medical (401) 783-0523  
Dental (401) 783-5646  
WIC (401) 360-1528

### THUNDERMIST HEALTH CENTER OF WEST WARWICK

Medical:  
186 Providence Street  
West Warwick, RI 02893  
(401) 615-2800

Dental:  
1219 Main Street  
West Warwick, RI 02893  
(401) 615-2804

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