



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**IRIS – Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services – Awarded \$50,000 for
for Refugee Health and Wellness Program**

Connecticut Health Foundation awards grant to reduce racial & ethnic health disparities among refugee population

New Haven, CT— IRIS – Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services – has been awarded a one-year grant from the Connecticut Health Foundation to fund its Refugee Health and Wellness Program. The \$50,000 grant will be used to maintain and expand IRIS’s comprehensive health program including health care coordination for newly-arrived refugees, medical self-sufficiency education, health education, provider training, and advocacy for medical interpretation. IRIS will also continue to advocate for and strengthen a Refugee Clinic at Yale-New Haven Hospital Primary Care Center.

Refugees—people who have fled their home country due to persecution—arrive in the U.S. with a wide range of health care needs. The main goal of the IRIS Health and Wellness Program is to provide new refugee arrivals with the tools they need to achieve improved health and wellness in their new home, which include:

- quick access to quality health services;
- access to culturally competent and linguistically appropriate services; and
- knowledge about preventive medicine, wellness topics, and management of chronic conditions.

IRIS will work towards an improved health care system that better supports refugees’ transition to becoming Connecticut’s newest Americans.

“Refugees endure so much suffering before being invited to come to the U.S. IRIS wants to make sure that they receive the best possible medical care once they arrive here,” says Kelly Hebrank, Health and Wellness Program Manager. “We are so pleased that the Connecticut Health Foundation recognizes the need to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities in Connecticut, and are thrilled to partner with them on this grant.”

The **Connecticut Health Foundation** (www.cthealth.org) is the state's largest independent, nonprofit grant-making foundation dedicated to improving the health of the people of Connecticut through systemic change, program innovation and health policy analysis. CT Health’s three priority areas include: children's mental health, reducing racial and ethnic health disparities, and oral health.

Twenty six years ago, **IRIS** began welcoming refugees to Connecticut. The mission of IRIS is to help refugees and other displaced people establish new lives, regain hope, and contribute to the vitality of Connecticut's communities. IRIS resettles approximately 120 refugees each year, and provides case management, acculturation assistance, basic needs such as food and housing, academic support for children, English lessons, job training and placement, and financial literacy training.

For more information about IRIS, please go online to www.irisct.org, or contact Kelly Hebrank at 203-562-2095 or khebrank@irisct.org.

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