

FEBRUARY 2022



COMMUNITY BENEFIT REPORT

CONNECTICUT HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS BUILDING A HEALTHIER CONNECTICUT

The emergence of COVID-19 has changed us. This previously unknown and unpredictable virus has caused unfathomable loss in so many families. It has challenged researchers to reach new heights of inquiry and discovery at unprecedented speed. The isolation of a quarantined society has increased the need for mental health services for both adults and children and also redoubled our focus and determination to develop the resources to help enable their recovery. Healthcare professionals who have seen so much illness, devastation, and stress on our healthcare resources, while tired and sometimes discouraged, continue to model resilience and to inspire the next generation with their heroism.



The consequences of injustice and inequities built into our culture have become crystal clear, with COVID-19 disproportionately affecting communities of color with heartbreaking results. This heightened awareness has compelled a stronger agenda for policymakers, community advocates and healthcare organizations to address the systemic root causes of the societal conditions and barriers that imperil well-being, particularly in the Black and Latino/a communities.

Hospitals in 2022 are engaged with

others in new efforts to identify and address core inequities in environment, housing, education, and economic mobility that hobble aspirations and reinforce a generational cycle of poverty and poor health. Hospital leadership is resulting in more robust initiatives with partners across community and business sectors to address systemic inequity. Hospitals are using our influence as employers, as purchasers of goods and services, as educators and anchors in our communities to reinforce a local focus on equalizing

access to new opportunities. While hospitals continue to deliver our mission to provide care to those who are acutely ill, and to educate and support those with chronic diseases to manage their health successfully, we are also working to develop creative ways to nurture more equitable access to opportunity, to aspiration, and to success for all our neighbors and for the benefit of our communities.

FY 2020 COMMUNITY BENEFIT BY THE NUMBERS



\$909.7 MILLION

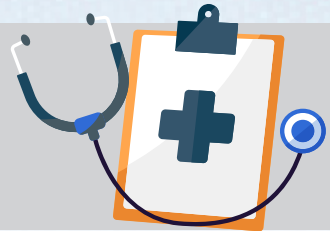
Unpaid hospital care provided to Medicaid beneficiaries

\$1.1 BILLION

Unpaid hospital care provided to Medicare beneficiaries

\$27.8 MILLION

Community health improvement services and operations

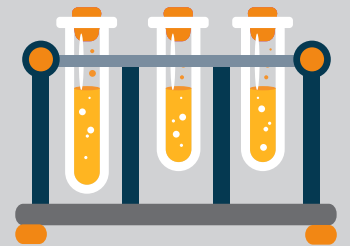


\$6.5 MILLION

Community building to create stronger, healthier communities

\$7.9 MILLION

Research and other programs to advance healthcare for patients and the community



\$229.8

MILLION

Health Professions Education



\$231.5 MILLION

Uncompensated care: Charity care/ bad debt to provide services for those who cannot pay



\$4.8 MILLION

Subsidized health services to provide care needed by the community

\$25.0 MILLION

Donations to help support community organizations



These data represent the most recently audited fiscal year, 2020, as reported to CHA by members.

COVID-19 VACCINE TIMELINE



First vaccine delivered to a Connecticut healthcare worker as hospitals roll out vaccines for their workforce

DEC 14 2020

Hospitals lead vaccine effort, open mass vaccination clinics across Connecticut

JAN 2021

171,035 vaccine doses administered to healthcare workers, medical first responders, and residents and staff of long-term care facilities

JAN 14 2021

Governor announces age-based plan with all residents age 16 and above eligible by May 3. Special focus on educators, child care providers, and high social vulnerability zip codes

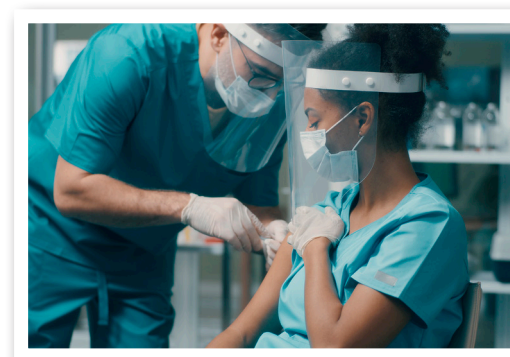
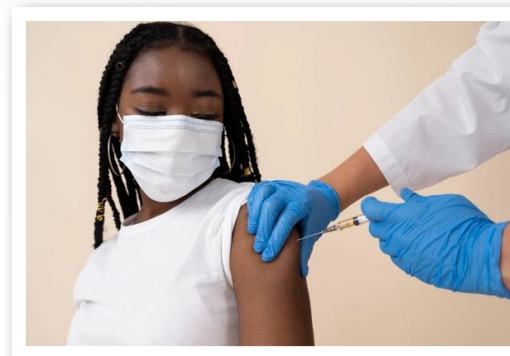
FEB 22 2021

COVID-19 vaccine available for all residents 16 and over

APRIL 1 2021

Connecticut becomes the first state to fully vaccinate more than 50% of all adults over 18

MAY 3 2021



MAY 12 2021

Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine becomes available for children 12-15 years old in Connecticut, extending eligibility to another 170,000 residents

JUNE 24 2021

CHA announces all hospitals in Connecticut will require COVID-19 vaccines for their employees for the safety and health of their patients, workforce, and communities, becoming only the second state to make the commitment

OCT 21 2021

Federal government expands use of COVID-19 vaccine booster doses

NOV 2 2021

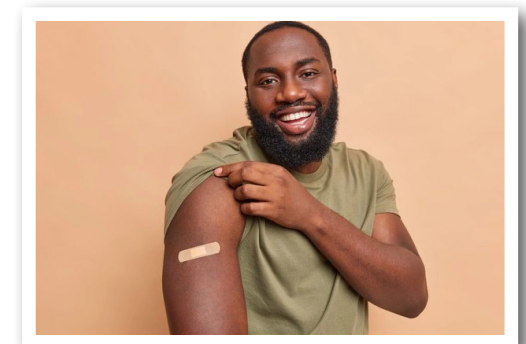
Hospitals gear up to begin administering vaccine to children 5-11 at CDC's authorization

NOV 19 2021

CDC approves boosters for all adults six months after full vaccination

DEC 2021

Connecticut hospitals and health systems had delivered nearly one million doses of vaccine by the end of 2021.



COVID-19 RESPONSE



Once again, in 2021, Connecticut hospitals were deeply engaged in the response to COVID-19. In its second year, that response added vaccination to the testing and treatment needs of our state. In the following section, you will read how hospitals and health systems continued the fight against this global pandemic, balancing normal operations with the additional needs presented by the evolving novel coronavirus.

BRISTOL HEALTH

Coming Together for a Healthy Community

A century ago, Bristol Hospital opened its doors in response to the community's need for care during the Spanish Flu pandemic. Over the 100 years to follow, that commitment to the health and well-being of its community has never wavered and has never been more evident than in the unprecedented times that currently challenge us all.

As a society, life has been lived through Zoom calls, gatherings attended via mobile devices, and, tragically, even final goodbyes to loved ones said over a phone call or video, not with a gentle kiss and a final embrace. It quickly became clear during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic that, in order to protect the community and help us all get back together in person, the community would have to come together more than ever.

When the vaccine gained emergency authorization, Bristol Health immediately joined forces with its community partners to distribute hundreds of flyers in multiple languages to small businesses, ensuring the entire population was receiving necessary information on how, when, and why they should receive the vaccine. Bristol Health physicians and leadership partnered with the local chapter of the NAACP to host virtual town hall information sessions to the population being hit hardest by the virus. Registration clinics were organized in multiple locations, including at area churches, businesses and community organizations like the American Legion, where 500 individuals were registered into the Vaccine Administration Management System for vaccine appointments at Bristol Health or other preferred vaccine sites. Bristol Health was also the first hospital-based vaccine provider to go live with the state-assisted 2-1-1 appointment line.

"Along with hospitals across the state, we have worked tirelessly to protect our residents, patients, and staff," said Bristol Health President and CEO Kurt A. Barwis, FACHE. "From being one of the first hospitals in the state to set up a COVID-19 testing station to vaccinating as many people in our community as possible, our work hasn't stopped and we will continue to work every day to keep our community safe and healthy."

In early April 2021, a unique partnership between ESPN, the Bristol-Burlington Health District and Bristol Health rallied together to open up a Mass Vaccination Clinic on the site of ESPN's North Campus. In the first nine days of operation, more than 4,500 doses of the vaccine were administered. The work bringing the vaccine to the community has included setting up pop-up clinics at senior centers, health fairs, religious outings and a broad range of other community events. COVID-19 vaccines, including third doses and boosters, continue to be offered to patients before they are discharged from Bristol Health, providing reassurance for many patients who want to receive the vaccine in a hospital setting.

To date, thanks to the tireless work of staff, volunteers, and with the support of its community partners, Bristol Health has administered over 26,000 doses of the vaccine and counting.

CONNECTICUT CHILDRENS

Help Me Grow: Supporting Families During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges and hardships to families across the country. The Help Me Grow (HMG) National Center, which is part of Connecticut Children's Office for Community Child Health, rallied to meet those needs by mobilizing affiliates around the country to ensure children and families had access to important resources to meet their basic needs.

With support from The JPB Foundation, 11 HMG affiliates combined their efforts to provide more than 2.6 million resources to young children and families. Through nearly 33,000 unique interactions with caregivers of infants and toddlers, these affiliates distributed:

- More than 1.1 million diapers
- More than 1.4 million baby wipes

- More than 16,000 ounces of formula
- More than 93,000 additional baby items

The project was envisioned to rapidly disperse funding and resources to families most in need due to pandemic-related hardships. With HMG affiliates already fielding many pandemic-related requests from families, the HMG National Center conducted a survey of affiliates to better understand these emerging needs. Affiliates reported the most pressing needs of families to be:

- Formula, food, diapers and wipes
- Childcare for essential workers
- Perinatal and postpartum mental health supports and services

After collecting and analyzing the survey data, the HMG National Center developed a strategy to meet families' most basic needs. It involved leveraging an existing workgroup of 11 affiliates that were already focused on better meeting the needs of children and families through building new partnerships. These affiliates were able to utilize information from the survey to better prepare their response to inquiries from families. They were also better positioned to quickly connect families to available resources to help meet pandemic-related needs. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, HMG served as a trusted and known infrastructure that families with young children turned to for help.

DAY KIMBALL HEALTHCARE

Day Kimball Collaborates to Provide COVID-19 Vaccinations

More than 60,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to residents in communities across Northeast Connecticut thanks to Day Kimball Healthcare (DKH) and its community partnerships.

Day Kimball collaborated with several local school districts and townships to ensure the area's children and their families could access evidence-based resources, and safe, age-appropriate vaccination sites in their communities. Vaccine distribution was driven through hospital, community, and school-based vaccine clinics, at pharmacies, and through Day Kimball Medical Group's adult and pediatric primary care practice locations.

"DKH has innovatively adapted care and services to meet the needs of our community throughout the pandemic," said Kyle Kramer, Chief Executive Officer, Day Kimball Healthcare. "As vaccines became available, we moved quickly to

offer vaccinations at central locations to ensure as many people who desired it had access to the vaccine as quickly as possible. We're very proud of the tremendous partnerships we have with school districts and townships across Northeast Connecticut, as well as with our partner at the Northeast District Department of Health," he said.

Day Kimball opened the doors to its first vaccine clinic on December 22, 2020, where 150 hospital staff members received the COVID-19 vaccine. Clinical staff volunteered their time to get the vaccine clinic up and running—some even coming out of retirement to lend a hand. It was the beginning of the daunting task to vaccinate the hospital's healthcare workers and employees as well as thousands of local residents across the northeast region.

Most recently, DKH has focused efforts on vaccinating children. DKH held its first pediatric COVID-19 vaccination clinic for

children ages 5-11 at Plainfield High School on November 10, at which 150 youth were vaccinated. A similar clinic was held on November 12 at Putnam Middle School in partnership with the Putnam, Thompson, and Woodstock school districts, where 300 more of the area's youth received their vaccinations. Day Kimball continues to provide all vaccine products and doses through "come one, come all" vaccination clinics throughout the region.

"The coordination of our vaccination efforts has been an enormous undertaking involving hundreds of dedicated individuals both inside and outside of our organization. We appreciate the time and talent they have all contributed in planning and operating these vaccine clinics which have protected thousands of Northeast Connecticut residents against COVID-19," Kramer added.

EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEALTH NETWORK (ECHN)
MANCHESTER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL &
ROCKVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL

Community Partnership Creates COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

On January 15, 2021, Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN) received a request from the town of Vernon to help them increase vaccination accessibility. Rockville General Hospital (RGH) was the ideal location to reach residents in the surrounding area. Together, town officials and ECHN employees established a COVID-19 vaccination clinic in the cafeteria of the hospital; it was up and running in five days. The clinic was modeled after the one

established at Manchester Memorial Hospital (MMH) just weeks prior.

ECHN hired schedulers and vaccinators, and also relied on the volunteerism of ECHN employees and leaders who offered to help whenever there was a break or need to be filled. “A surprising and inspirational by-product of creating the clinic was the camaraderie that ensued and raised morale throughout our healthcare network,” remarked Kim Palma, ECHN Administrative Director of Operations, one of the primary hospital administrators responsible for the clinic operations. “The MMH clinic ran five days a week and then we consolidated the operation at RGH, running four days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., staying open later most days to ensure every dose was used.” Using every dose was a top priority for all involved. The town of Vernon and Rockville General Hospital created a system to notify people when extra doses were available. At the end of a

day, the clinic would communicate the number of doses remaining and minutes later, people would arrive, ready for their vaccination. “Not a single dose was wasted!” said Dan DeGallo, ECHN’s Chief Strategy Officer. The partnerships between the communities and ECHN continued once these clinics were open. Each day, police officers, teachers, emergency medical workers, town workers and officials showed up, working alongside ECHN staff to help with clinic operation with one common goal: to protect members of the community and diminish the spread of this virus. In Vernon, town representatives screened and directed patients, escorted patients in wheelchairs, served refreshments, and monitored people for reactions post-vaccination—performing any task to facilitate the smooth operation of the RGH clinic.

Feedback from the community was overwhelmingly positive. So many of the residents who were vaccinated talked about the comfort they felt receiving the vaccine from their trusted

local hospital. They also appreciated how easy it was to make appointments with the dedicated call center for vaccine scheduling and questions. Tom Cassidy, ECHN Pharmacy Director and Kim Palma’s counterpart at RGH’s clinic, recalls the gratitude expressed by parents of adult children with physical and mental disabilities. “A call would come in from a parent who needed their child to receive their vaccination, but due to various issues, would not be able to wait in a long line. We would make an appointment to meet them in the parking lot and administer the vaccine right when they arrived.” The RGH clinic operated until April when vaccines were made widely available to the public and in just four months more than 20,000 doses were administered to people across the region.

GRIFFIN HEALTH

Griffin Health Provides COVID-19 Protection and Wellness Throughout Pandemic

Caregivers at Griffin Health helped to increase community access to COVID-19 testing and vaccination, while also seeking ways to improve wellness in Griffin’s community.

Griffin established a COVID-19 drive-through testing center at the main hospital within weeks of the virus being identified in Connecticut. As the COVID-19 virus spread across Connecticut in the latter half of 2020, Griffin organized drive-through community testing sites in Willimantic, Naugatuck, Middlebury, and Trumbull. These locations were identified by state officials as needing additional testing capacity. Griffin caregivers collected specimens in bitter cold and harsh winter snowstorms. Throughout it all, Griffin caregivers promoted positive relationships with patients, including handing out free hot cocoa, tumblers, and hand warmers during the cold months.

When the COVID-19 vaccines became available, Griffin established mass vaccination centers in Shelton and Naugatuck. Griffin also reached into the community to provide these life-saving vaccines to elderly and underserved individuals, hosting small clinics at churches, community centers, schools, and senior housing centers. Additionally, inbound/outbound calling initiatives contacted thousands of Valley residents to offer vaccination scheduling assistance to those who needed technological support. Griffin partnered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to host walk-up vaccination clinics in cities with a high social vulnerability index as well as geographically isolated communities, and collaborated with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) to make the vaccines accessible across Connecticut.

Throughout all of its COVID-19 testing and vaccination programs, Griffin sought opportunities to advance the overall health of individuals by partnering with local social service agencies to address



social influencers of health while providing access to vaccination.

Griffin connected with community partners, including the Salvation Army, to offer food and necessities at its drive-through COVID-19 testing site in Naugatuck. Griffin’s Community Outreach team joined forces with TEAM,

Inc., a private, not-for-profit human service agency, serving the Lower Naugatuck Valley, and the Connecticut Food Bank to provide more than 50 vaccinations during food distribution events that provided more than 41,000 pounds of free food. For community members with concerns about entering a vaccination clinic, this was an opportunity to get vaccinated easily in their car, while receiving needed food and toiletries. Access to healthy, nutritious food is critical to good health and empowers individuals to prevent or manage chronic conditions related to poor eating habits such as obesity, diabetes, and congestive heart failure.

When the city of Ansonia identified the need to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates, Griffin and city leaders organized a series of clinics at the historic Ansonia Armory to make it easier for residents to be protected. As a thank you to the city, Griffin worked with community leaders to repair and renovate the Armory to encourage recreational fitness and healthy, social engagement to improve the well-being of the community.

HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

COVID-19 Response Requires Focus on Agility and Equity

Confronting the COVID-19 pandemic has required agility, innovation, and sheer grit. Since the earliest days of the global health crisis in March 2020, Hartford HealthCare’s (HHC) 33,000 colleagues have created new ways to provide more resources, more outreach, and more information. The system challenged itself to continually pivot its planning and create convenient solutions for a concerned and often confused public.

Mobilizing efforts

Hartford HealthCare mobilized—literally—operating mobile testing clinics across Connecticut, opening the state’s first mobile vaccine clinic, and creating a statewide network of mega-clinics as infection rates surged. During Fiscal Year 2021, Hartford HealthCare:

- Conducted 836,516 COVID-19 tests
- Held 1,456 testing events throughout the state
- Provided 14,652 mobile vaccinations
- Conducted 388 mobile vaccination events
- Delivered more than 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine

A focus on health equity

The pandemic underscored the issue of racial disparities in the delivery of health services. In 2021, Hartford HealthCare proudly added

a fifth value, equity, to its legacy values of caring, excellence, integrity and safety. This commitment to health equity informed messaging, operations, resource allocation, and priorities. With the distribution of vaccines, there were special efforts to address inequities, by creating improved access, targeted education, partnership development, and data collection. For example, Hartford HealthCare:

- Provided more than 150,000 tests on-site at community locations including shelters, soup kitchens, assisted- and skilled-nursing facilities, schools, and businesses
- Held 388 mobile COVID-19 vaccination clinics, which provided more than 14,000 vaccinations
- Launched a Neighborhood Health initiative—bringing more care directly to underserved communities

Making more access, more easily

Hartford HealthCare accelerated its digital strategies to enable access more easily. HHC developed a program to create personalized text-message outreaches—reaching patients by geography, age, and health status—and enabling them to easily schedule a test or vaccine, or fulfill another health need identified in their health record. During the push to

vaccinate the state, HHC sent out more than 1.5 million text messages, enabling more than 600,000 people to engage and pursue COVID-19 vaccinations.

Education and awareness

Hartford HealthCare is a steady and reliable source of information about the pandemic, providing near-daily interviews of our clinical, operational, and infectious disease experts with statewide media; hosting and sponsoring special COVID-19 news segments on network television; maintaining and updating a robust vaccine landing page on the system website; and providing information via Facebook Live events, social media posts, Health News Hub articles, podcasts, and text messages.

Toward the future

While the pandemic still persists, Hartford HealthCare has succeeded in aligning efforts to meet the communities’ needs and building a framework that supports better care in the years to come. The agility, innovation, and grit of Hartford HealthCare’s 33,000 colleagues continually move the system past obstacles and clear a pathway, building on the lessons of the pandemic, to a future that is better than normal.

MIDDLESEX HEALTH

Middlesex Health Partners Address COVID-19 Vaccine Equity

Middlesex Health partnered with the Middletown Health Department and the Ministerial Health Fellowship to implement the state's Vaccine Equity Partnership Program. Middletown was one of 27 municipalities to receive federal stimulus funding through the Connecticut Department of Health for this program.

Focusing on vaccine equity is an important health equity initiative.

Early vaccine data in Connecticut indicated disparities in COVID-19 vaccination in communities of color and vulnerable populations throughout Connecticut. The disparities underscored an urgency to address inequities and close the vaccine coverage gap for these underserved communities.

Middletown's Vaccine Equity Partnership Program focused on ensuring that COVID-19 vaccines reached individuals who are Black, Latino/a, or members of other communities of color by meeting people where they live and while engaging with people they trust. The Middletown project used "COVID-19 trusted messengers" from the Middletown community, who reached out to individuals to address COVID-19 vaccine concerns and answer questions. They also helped to break down barriers to COVID-19 vaccine access.

The COVID-19 trusted messengers canvassed local neighborhoods; provided culturally sensitive COVID-19 vaccine education and resources in a supportive, non-judgmental way; provided information about COVID-19 vaccine clinics; registered people for COVID-19 vaccination appointments; and staffed the Middletown Health Department and Ministerial Health Fellowship weekly COVID-19 vaccine clinic at Cross Street AME Zion Church.

Middlesex Health's primary involvement was to write the grant for this program and to provide the work plan and budget development for the project. All of the grant money went to community partners, securing two full-time COVID-19 trusted messenger positions.

As part of this project, Middlesex Health staff also joined Middletown's Vaccine Equity Partnership Program leadership team to provide ongoing support, when needed. In addition, Middlesex Health created COVID-19 safety, prevention, and vaccine educational materials, which were shared in the Middletown community by the COVID-19 trusted messengers, and it partnered with the city and local community groups to hold two large community-wide events that highlighted COVID-19 vaccine pop-up clinics.

The Middletown Health Department, the Ministerial Health Fellowship and Middlesex Health have worked together on other community-based programs, and this Vaccine Equity Partnership Program built on those existing, collaborative relationships.



NUVANCE HEALTH

Approaching COVID-19 From Many Angles at Nuvance Health

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged communities to move beyond their comfort zone, to try new things, and to find ways to meet anticipated needs without knowing what the future actually would hold. Sharon Hospital became designated as one of four sites for a mobile field hospital early in the pandemic. The goal was to offer additional flexibility and increase the state's bed capacity to handle potential surges in COVID-19 infections.

Working with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the National Guard and the Governor's Foot Guard and Horse Guard were deployed. A 25-bed field hospital—a modular, trailer-mounted system that includes power generation and climate control—was erected in April 2020, in Sharon Hospital's main parking area. Thankfully, even at the peak of that first surge, Connecticut hospitals had the capacity to care for all

patients and the field hospital was not needed. Yet, the collaboration between state, National Guard and hospital leadership proved that the state was prepared to manage contingencies, as needed.

During the peaks of COVID-19 illness, safety measures have included restricting inpatient visitation—difficult choices made to protect the safety of patients, families, and staff. Still, healthcare personnel know that the love and support of family members is a key component of patient recovery. In an effort to address barriers to communication and improve the patient experience, Norwalk Hospital created an emotional outreach support call process to identify patients and families most affected by isolation. Caregivers highlighted those with a length of stay longer than three days to receive targeted calls and offerings including electronic get-well cards, licensed clinical social worker and spiritual care referrals. Chief Experience Officer Steve Meth commented, "We supported families at home feeling helpless that they couldn't be with their loved ones."

By the time Norwalk Hospital safely restored inpatient visitation at the end of August 2021, they had been able to provide these supportive services to more than 90% of high-risk patients. Employees jumped in to assist from diverse departments, as well as volunteers from the community. A refined mobile user interface made it seamless for staff and volunteers to use, and this software served as a launch pad for more advanced rounding tools that are still in use today.

In the Danbury area, screening for social influencers of health that are routinely conducted at Danbury Hospital revealed the need for nutritious food was reaching a critical level. For those living in poverty, the loss of jobs, and suspension of services at soup kitchens and shelters early in the pandemic further destabilized precarious situations, and patients reporting food insecurity had risen to 56% in the Medicare and Medicaid patient population.

The problem came to the attention of the community volunteer leaders on the Danbury Hospital/Nuvance Health Board, which identified local resources, estimated the need, types of food requested and associated costs. Then these leaders made personal contributions to ensure there was a safe, six-month supply of nutritious food to stock a drive-through pantry. Tens of thousands of dollars were collected to support the effort. This fund-raising coincided with staff food drives at Danbury and New Milford Hospitals, all of which helped those most affected by poverty in these communities feed themselves and their families.

STAMFORD HEALTH

Stamford Health Says "No Barriers" to COVID-19 Vaccination

In January 2021, when Stamford Health launched its public COVID-19 vaccine program, it was clear based on the data that Black and Latino/a populations were disparately affected by the virus. In fact, for months preceding vaccine availability, Stamford Health alongside other community partners had been working to reduce the spread of disease through a COVID-19 High-Risk Task Force. When polling indicated those same populations exhibited the most vaccine hesitancy, Stamford Health began targeted outreach and used trusted messengers to encourage early vaccination.

The program quickly garnered a moniker "No Barriers," as it strove to eliminate barriers to vaccination, such as cultural hesitancy, lack of technology, language, and proof-of-eligibility requirements. Stamford Health relied on members of the Vita Health & Wellness Partnership (a network of local agencies working collectively to assist all who live throughout the Stamford community to be as healthy as possible) and many others, to be trusted voices in the community. These organizations reached out to their clientele, parishioners, and members encouraging them to get vaccinated. Once an individual agreed, that community partner gave Stamford Health their name. All that individual had to do was arrive at a Stamford Health vaccine clinic during a large block of time. They did not have to pre-register or provide insurance or ID. As long as a community partner referred them, Stamford Health vaccinated the individual and made a second appointment on the spot.

More than 3,000 individuals were vaccinated through No Barriers. Leading referrers included Dr. Tabitha

Fortt, Stamford's African American Churches, The Jackie Robinson Park of Fame, AmeriCares, Family Centers, the Stamford NAACP, Building One Community (B1C), ShopRite, the city of Stamford and a local union. Interpreters were on hand, including volunteers from B1C and AmeriCares to help their referrals with questions. Feedback from participants allowed for continual process improvement. One ShopRite employee reported that going through Stamford Health's No Barriers vaccine program "felt like being in a spa." The vaccine team was committed to ensuring everyone felt cared for and safe.

No Barriers received national media attention and as a result, a local foundation reached out to offer support to allow Stamford Health to take the program to the next level, just as vaccine demand began to wane. A generous grant from the Cohen Foundation funded door-to-door outreach in socially vulnerable neighborhoods beginning in May 2021. Community partner Family Centers housed that effort. The city of Stamford subsequently received a state grant to continue the public outreach. As of October 2021, every census tract in Stamford had at least 80% of its age-eligible residents vaccinated with at least one dose, making it the most-vaccinated city in the state.

"No Barriers showed what we could achieve when we work hand-in-hand with our community partners" said Kathleen Silard, Stamford Health's President & CEO. "With momentum from this program, we are engaged with community partners to discuss how we continue to improve the communities we serve through collaborative work."

TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

Trinity Health Of New England Improves Access to COVID-19 Vaccine Through 24-Hour Vax-A-Thon

In the spring of 2021, one year into the global COVID-19 pandemic—when the state’s rate of hospitalizations continued well into the hundreds, shipments of the life-saving vaccine had begun to significantly rise in Connecticut, and eligibility to receive the vaccine was opening up to those over the age of 16—the need for increased access to the COVID-19 vaccine became more imperative than ever. Trinity Health Of New England identified the critical need to expand access to the COVID-19 vaccine, particularly for the most vulnerable populations who have been hardest hit by COVID-19.

The response: the launch of the Vax-A-Thon, the region’s only 24-hour vaccine clinic. Organizers of the mass vaccine clinic prioritized, in particular, the removal of key barriers for vulnerable populations. For example, in an effort to take away factors that had historically proven to

be roadblocks for some, individuals who were eligible to receive a vaccine were able to do so at the Vax-A-Thon without an appointment, without insurance, and without an ID or confirmation of citizenship. The 24-hour model of the clinic also made the vaccine available to those who may not have otherwise been available during normal daytime clinic or business hours.

“As part of our Mission and Core Values, we pride ourselves on our ability to provide equitable care for all community members,” said Reggy Eadie, MD, MBA, President and CEO of Trinity Health Of New England. “We, at Trinity Health Of New England, had, and continue to have, a responsibility to make the COVID-19 vaccine as accessible to all members of our local neighborhoods as possible. The Vax-A-Thon was our way of proving our commitment to ensuring ease of access to the COVID-19 vaccine. We are

so proud to be the first and only healthcare organization in New England to hold a 24-hour COVID-19 vaccine clinic.”

The Vax-A-Thon, held at The Artists Collective, a community center in Hartford’s north end, ran non-stop throughout the night, offering a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine alongside refreshments, music, and educational resources. All second dose appointments were scheduled onsite, at the time of the patient’s first dose, which helped individuals ensure they were able to complete the process to become fully vaccinated.

During the Vax-A-Thon, 75 non-clinical volunteers and over 200 clinical volunteers provided roughly 3,000 COVID-19 vaccines to eligible individuals.

UCONN JOHN DEMPSEY HOSPITAL

UConn Health Rallying Community to Stop Spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 transmits more easily in overcrowded and poorly ventilated places. To address this, UConn Health has united the UConn community to kick off an Indoor Air Quality Initiative, building inexpensive do-it-yourself (DIY) air purifiers as part of a pilot project to improve community health in local elementary schools, homeless shelters, and beyond.

The nurse-led initiative, organized by UConn Health and its Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Center, with the UConn School of Nursing, School of Engineering, School of Medicine, the Department of Public Health Sciences, and Connecticut Area Health Education Center, believes that a multi-pronged approach to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 can be a real game-changer including the use of more accessible, inexpensive DIY portable indoor air cleaners across the community.

Among other strategies, the “Corsi-Rosenthal Box” can help stop the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses, such as influenza. The boxes remove 90% of virus-carrying aerosols from the air, and are also effective against dust and allergens. With just about 30 minutes of an assembler’s time and \$60 worth of supplies— a box fan, high-quality air filters, cardboard and duct tape—these devices drastically reduce COVID-carrying aerosols, providing comparable filtration capabilities to expensive professionally manufactured portable HEPA filters.

“Cleaner air will protect educators, students, and families. This DIY portable air cleaner is a low-cost, evidence-based intervention that immediately improves indoor air quality,” says UConn Health MS Center



Nurse Practitioner Marina A. Creed, who spearheaded the initiative along with the help of friend and colleague Sarah Laskowski of The Jackson Laboratory and School of Nursing Associate Dean for Research Angela Starkweather. “My hope is that we can help make schools one of the safest places in the community,

and by extension, better protect my patients, many of whom are immunocompromised.”

The initial 100 units built at the first box-a-thon event held at UConn Health on Dec. 4 by more than 30 inter-professional health students, nurses, doctors, and staff were donated to West Hartford Public Schools for their cafeterias. The first event’s supplies were sponsored by the UConn School of Nursing and the Petit Family Foundation. Next, 500 undergraduate engineering students will build boxes to be donated to Coventry Public Schools. Additional UConn box-a-thon events are planned for 2022.

“This is interventional public health in action,” says Dr. Jaime Imitola, Director of the UConn Health MS Center. “It is impressive what the UConn community can do and rally toward a worthy cause.”

WATERBURY HOSPITAL
PROSPECT

Waterbury HEALTH Teams With Hispanic Coalition to Vaccinate Community

Waterbury HEALTH was an area leader in community vaccination efforts, delivering more than 60,000 vaccine doses in clinics in nearly a dozen area towns over a six-month period. Waterbury HEALTH was able to best leverage long-standing community connections to help broaden the reach of the COVID-19 vaccine effort to its communities, becoming one of the largest vaccine operations in the area.

This included teaming up with Post University and the borough of Naugatuck to run drive-through clinics five days a week that delivered more than 2,000 shots a day at the peak of community vaccination. This massive work included running pop-up clinics in Waterbury, Watertown, Plymouth, Southbury, Oxford, and other towns.

Though the mass drive-through clinics were open to anyone, it became

clear that transportation and technology were barriers for many. For the Latino/a community in Waterbury, these obstacles were often compounded by language barriers.

Looking for a way to help deliver the vaccine to everyone, Waterbury HEALTH teamed up with the Hispanic Coalition of Greater Waterbury and the city of Waterbury to run pop-up vaccine clinics at River Baldwin Community Center in a densely populated South End neighborhood. This was the city’s first Spanish language COVID-19 clinic, which operated weekly for several months.

The Hispanic Coalition, which advocates for the culture and advancement of causes and people of Hispanic heritage in greater Waterbury, makes its staff and resources available to help vaccinate

the community. Members of the organization became healthcare trackers and translators in order to help healthcare professionals from Waterbury HEALTH and the city of Waterbury bring the vaccine to these neighborhoods.

In addition, Waterbury HEALTH and Post University teamed up with the coalition and leading pastors in the Latino/a community to put together a video documentary in Spanish on the importance of taking the vaccine. The video was distributed through social media channels by dozens of organizations and community leaders in order to advocate for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Thanks to the collaboration between the Hispanic Coalition, Waterbury HEALTH and city of Waterbury 1,000 underserved patients were vaccinated in this one clinic. Building on the success of the joint Spanish language clinic, the three collaborators have added other healthcare partners including Community Health Center, Griffin Health, and other civic and public organizations, ensuring that the important vaccination work will continue into 2022.



YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

YNHHS Vaccinates Communities Throughout the State and Beyond

In early 2020, departments throughout Yale New Haven Health (YNHHS) mobilized quickly to get the health system ready for the anticipated arrival in Connecticut of COVID-19. A year later, YNHHS again responded to an immediate, COVID-related need with record speed.

In January of 2021, state officials enlisted healthcare organizations to help with Connecticut’s massive COVID-19 vaccination program. Between January 22 and 27, YNHHS opened eight community COVID-19 vaccination clinics across the state. Within a few days, these clinics had vaccinated more than 4,000 people 75 and older. Since then, more clinics have opened and YNHHS has administered nearly 500,000 vaccines.

“This has been a huge effort,” said Kyle Ballou, vice president, YNHHS Community and Government Relations. “Planning, launching and operating these clinics has involved staff members from clinical and non-clinical departments throughout the health system.”

Ballou was among the leaders and staff from various YNHHS departments serving on a task force to oversee different aspects of the public vaccine rollout.

The task force found centrally located facilities for vaccination clinics, spacious enough to accommodate a lot of people, with social distancing. A number of clinics are at Northeast Medical Group offices; others are at schools and community centers throughout Connecticut. Before they could open, the sites needed furniture, supplies and equipment, such as computers, and refrigerators for vaccine storage.

The task force also quickly had to develop



procedures for vaccine-eligible YNHHS patients to make appointments, by calling one main number or signing up online.

Staffing the vaccination clinics has been an enormous task, with dozens of people needed at each clinic daily, including weekends. The vaccine task force developed a way for people to sign up to staff the clinics, get trained, and volunteer or receive compensation for their work. Dubbed the “Crush COVID Crew,” clinic staff includes clinicians licensed to prepare and administer vaccine doses, and non-clinical people who greet and prescreen patients and serve in other roles. Many YNHHS employees have volunteered for the vaccination effort, along with members of the community who donated their time.

In order to ensure equitable access for vulnerable communities, YNHHS also brought the vaccine to neighborhoods in “pop-up” clinics held at houses of worship and other locations. These were great collaborations with partner churches and mosques, as

well as the surrounding neighborhoods. By collaborating with the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) YNHHS was able to undertake a large-scale mobile vaccination program aimed at reaching the communities that may have limited access to the healthcare facilities or pharmacies offering the vaccine. Appointments were not required and residents could walk up and be vaccinated. In its first week of operation in New Haven, more than 600 residents were vaccinated – results exceeding any other FEMA trailer in the state.

“These vaccination efforts require the expertise and hard work of many people throughout the health system,” said Thomas Balcezak, MD, YNHHS chief clinical officer. “I am immensely proud and grateful to all our staff who continue to show great distinction, empathy and professionalism as we navigated this last, most intense phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

GAYLORD SPECIALTY HEALTHCARE

Virtual Support Group Brings Camaraderie, Insight to Long-Haulers

Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, a rehabilitation-focused healthcare system headquartered in Wallingford, has played a critical role in the COVID-19 pandemic response by admitting the sickest and most deconditioned COVID-19 patients directly from the ICUs of its acute care partners for complex medical care, ventilator weaning, and intensive rehabilitation.

It became evident early on that many patients were experiencing anxiety, depression, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder-like symptoms. Gaylord staff organized an informal, in-person support group to help COVID-19 patients process their common experiences, ask questions, and support each other in the absence of their loved ones.

Recognizing that Gaylord’s COVID-19 patients would lack clinical and peer-to-peer social support once they returned to their homes, staff developed a virtual COVID-19

support group for patients, their families and caregivers.

In June 2020, the free, bi-weekly virtual support group was launched, moderated by a Gaylord physical therapist and Gaylord’s Community Relations Coordinator. As the benefits and need became clear, the program was made available to any COVID-19 survivors in the community.

In the group’s earliest weeks, many participants revealed that they continued to suffer from serious, lingering, symptoms. Although the term “long-hauler” had not yet been coined, it became apparent that a long-term issue was overwhelmingly affecting many survivors. Gaylord recognized a great unmet need for continued services and became one of the first healthcare organizations in the nation to offer outpatient COVID-19 recovery services.

Virtual support group sessions have featured Gaylord’s clinical staff, such as a physiatrist to discuss long-COVID, a dietitian who shared eating tips for optimal recovery, a physical therapist with advice on returning to exercise, a neuropsychiatrist to address brain fog, and more.

To-date, Gaylord has hosted 37 free support sessions attended by 50 unique participants. Many have developed close friendships with each other and have praised the program as a safe forum “to share and not be judged.”

One participant wrote, “After COVID-19, I was in a difficult state. This group is a place where I can join others who understand what I went through and how I am struggling daily. They give me hope and the understanding I need to keep moving forward. I hope to regain much of what I’ve lost and the members of this group are there to help.”

HOSPITAL FOR SPECIAL CARE

Caring for Special Needs Patients During COVID-19

When COVID-19 threatened to create even greater barriers to care for the highly complex patient populations Hospital for Special Care (HFSC) serves, the organization deepened its commitment to patient-centered specialty practice, expanding both access to care and clinical research.

Connecticut families managing autism spectrum disorder have struggled with a fragmented service system that doesn’t meet their child’s needs. When schools and many community programs closed during the pandemic, family routines were up-ended, critical supports disappeared, and, for many, crisis management became the new normal.

Hospital for Special Care’s outpatient autism services immediately transitioned to telehealth services to ensure continuity of care for families. The temporary pivot to telehealth allowed clinicians to gain new insight into family dynamics and environmental stimuli in the home, allowing more refined interventions

to address target behaviors. The hospital’s inpatient autism program continued to operate at full capacity, with extensive infectious disease prevention protocols in place to keep patients safe from COVID-19. Construction of a new expanded inpatient facility and partial hospital program for autism patients continued uninterrupted and both have opened during the pandemic.

HFSC also recognized the magnitude of the impact COVID-19 could have on patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Patients with ALS, a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, face extreme risk from any respiratory infection and are highly vulnerable to COVID-19. ALS advances rapidly in many patients and often proves fatal within just a few years of diagnosis.

COVID-19 posed another threat to these patients. HFSC provides Connecticut’s ALS patients with unique access to important

therapy trials. Delaying access to clinical trials for these patients could have devastating consequences. HFSC’s Neuromuscular Center research team worked tirelessly with infectious disease experts and clinical trial coordinators to develop safe and effective protocols to maintain access to the nation’s leading clinical trials.

HFSC opened a dedicated COVID-19 recovery unit to provide critically needed intensive rehabilitation, ventilator weaning and supportive care for the patients most severely affected by COVID-19 infection. The hospital loaned ventilators to acute care hospitals, launched telehealth services to provide continuity of care to isolated patients, and reallocated staff resources to connect patients and their families through virtual and window visits. Hospital for Special Care operated at surge capacity for over a year, caring for more patients than ever before.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT ACTIVITIES



As we do each year, hospitals also reached out to serve our communities with activities that were not directly related to COVID-19. During a pandemic, there are still patients with cancer who need extra assistance, people who need health screenings or primary care, access to experimental treatments, or basic needs like food and shelter. Below are the stories of these efforts, in some cases affected by the restrictions of COVID-19, but pursued with a passion to support the well-being of the residents of our communities.

THE WILLIAM W. BACKUS HOSPITAL HARTFORD HEALTHCARE EAST REGION

Backus Partnership Tailors Food Donations to Diets

When Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center (PNC) Executive Director Susan Sedensky sat down a few months ago with Joseph Zuzel, the new Manager of Community Health for Hartford HealthCare's (HHC) East Region, it was a true meeting of the minds.

"It was amazing," she recalled. "Joe was talking about his vision, and I was talking about my vision, and we learned we had the same vision! We both want to educate community food pantry clients on healthy food choices. I have been wanting to do this forever, to educate people about their food."

Together they created a program unique to the East Region—Backus Hospital-based registered dietitian, Katie Field, held information sessions at PNC over the summer to teach staff and volunteers about food choices specific to several health conditions, including kidney disease, heart disease and diabetes. HHC also provides laminated handouts to guide staff and volunteers as they pack food boxes for distribution and flyers for pantry clients.

"My goal with community health is to create collaborations and partnerships that have long-term, positive effects on the health of residents across the region," Zuzel said. "By teaming up with PNC to provide people the best foods for their specific health and dietary needs, we are truly embedding ourselves in the well-being of the community."

In 2020, the PNC food pantry served 1,500 families in the greater Stonington area, an increase of about 200 families, which Sedensky attributed to economic hardships brought on by COVID-19. In addition, every Friday they send 300 children home with "Weekend Back Packs" containing enough food for two days. The food pantry is open five days a week. Each family typically takes home four to five bags/boxes a week, filled with staples, canned goods, fresh vegetables from the PNC community garden, meats, and dairy products.

"Being able to create food boxes for clients with specific health issues will be incredible," Sedensky said. "We often hear from clients that they have a new diagnosis, and it can be overwhelming to them. This is an easy way for us to help them."

Field also shared strategies with PNC staff and volunteers for getting people to try new foods that will be better for their health.

"Don't present it as, 'You can't have this ...,'" she counseled. "Instead, present it as, 'Here's everything you can have and let's try to limit these things.' We want to focus on fresh or frozen versus processed or canned. They might not be used to that, so take it slow."



BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL VALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

Bridgeport Hospital Team Manages Complex Patients

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic reached Connecticut in early 2020, Bridgeport Hospital was exploring ways to improve care for its patients. Hospital leaders recognized there was a growing number of people living with complex care needs characterized by multi-morbidity, mental health challenges, and social vulnerability. These patients often experience increased emergency room use and hospitalizations. They also often have gaps in care resulting in delays in preventive services.

The hospital assembled a team to develop and implement initiatives to address this. The team leaders included medical and nursing leaders, as well as operational and fundraising leaders in hopes of inspiring philanthropic gifts for the program.

It was clear that these complex patients required integration of health and social care beyond traditional medical services to address their health needs. With this, the Complex Care Management Team was developed. This team provides care to patients who meet criteria for the program and are receiving primary care services at the Bridgeport Hospital Primary Care Center. The team consists of a nurse care coordinator, social worker, pharmacist, patient navigator, medical

advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) and a psychiatric APRN. This Complex Care Team model provides consistency of care and more intensive follow up and management, while recognizing that patients are equal partners and a vital part of their care team.

The Complex Care Team has enrolled 98 patients to date, all with diabetes as one of their health challenges. Nineteen patients have graduated from the program with their diabetes controlled. The patients currently enrolled are showing consistent improvement in their diabetes control. In addition to diabetes control, among all patients enrolled, 72% have blood pressure control and 86% of eligible patients have completed their breast cancer screenings. They have a pneumonia vaccination rate of 88% and a depression screening rate of 100%. Emergency room visits pre- and post-enrollment have decreased from 266 to 115 and hospitalizations decreased from 128 to 75. The team has been able to address, and in many cases eliminate, barriers related to patients' housing, transportation, food insecurity, and financial needs.

The Complex Care Team was also fortunate to be able to pilot a medically tailored meals program to a select group of enrolled patients. Funding for the pilot came from the Bridgeport Hospital Foundation and consisted of a two-month trial that provided lunch and dinner seven days a week. This program provided additional support to patients struggling with food insecurities, while also providing education on food choices for these meals with the assistance of a nutritionist.

BRISTOL HEALTH

Bristol Health Feeds Families at Thanksgiving

Delivering care to the community is at the center of everything Bristol Health does. That care doesn't always take place inside the walls of Bristol Hospital, or one of its many primary care or advanced specialty care offices, but also in the heart of the community itself. When there's a need, the goal is always to find a way to address it.

Many in the greater Bristol community continue to feel the financial impact of the pandemic, meaning the approaching holidays had turned from what's normally a time of



cheer and celebration to a time of stress and struggle—no more so than at Thanksgiving. Knowing that an increased number of families would not be able to afford a true Thanksgiving dinner, the Bristol Health Medical Staff teamed up with its Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program to hold a food drive in the hopes of easing the burden on those less fortunate.

On November 18, 2021, the WIC staff distributed bags of food filled with nonperishable goods such as vegetables, stuffing ingredients, gravy, pie mixes and much more to 180 families in need. Each

also received a Stop & Shop gift card to be used to purchase a turkey. The Bristol Health Medical Staff donated \$9,300 to make the food drive possible.

The recipients, Melissa Dickau, director for Bristol Health's WIC program said, were truly grateful.

"A lot of them say they don't know how they would get the meal together otherwise," she said. "They just express their gratitude."

While the need this Thanksgiving was greater than most, assuring that those who need it receive a helping hand around the holiday is nothing new. The Medical Staff Thanksgiving Food Drive has been taking place for three decades. It was started by Dr. Dennis Ferguson, a retired radiologist and Bristol Hospital physician advisor.

"The community required some assistance back then, as it does now," he said. "...We've fed a lot of people over the years."

THE HOSPITAL OF CENTRAL CONNECTICUT,
MIDSTATE MEDICAL CENTER
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE CENTRAL REGION

No One Fights Alone

The Hospital of Central Connecticut (HOCC) and MidState Medical Center take a unique approach in providing comfort to patients diagnosed with breast cancer and the message is simple – no one fights alone.

Jill Bertolini, former Director of Medical Staff Services at HOCC and MidState, was at the center of this initiative, which is having an impact on countless women in the community. In October 2019, shortly after her wedding and honeymoon, Bertolini was diagnosed with breast cancer. A month later, she underwent a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery. Later, thinking about her recovery, Bertolini decided she would make a bag every October for Breast Cancer Awareness month and fill it with items that helped her get through recovery, giving the bag to her breast surgeon to give to a patient.

“I wanted to create some sort of way for women to feel loved, wrapped in warmth and wrapped in care,” Bertolini explained.

In September 2020, a month before delivering a bag, she received another devastating diagnosis – inoperable, stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Doctors determined there was no connection with the



breast cancer, and Bertolini was told that patients with her prognosis who go through treatment live about a year. She opted for treatment and, despite everything, remained committed to making baskets for mastectomy patients.

Bertolini’s colleagues quickly learned what was going on and, in June 2021, launched the inaugural Jill Bertolini Symposium, a

fundraiser that raised more than \$50,000. All the proceeds from this event, which they plan to hold annually, will ensure that every woman undergoing a mastectomy at HOCC or MidState receives a “Jill Bag.”

“The overarching response has been one of gratitude and appreciation,” said Camelia Lawrence, MD, Director of Breast Surgery at both hospitals. “Many are in awe that she has been able to muster the courage and selflessness to help other women impacted by the disease. They have found the contents of the Jill Bag equally helpful during the post-mastectomy recovery period.”

The symposium also provides discussion, education, and information about cancer screenings, diagnosis, treatment, resources, and advancements in technology in one setting that can be lifesaving for patients and their families.

“This is my legacy and as long as it helped one woman and made her feel better, that’s all that matters to me,” said Bertolini, who, sadly, passed away in December.

DANBURY HOSPITAL
NUVANCE HEALTH

A Supportive Touch for Caregivers at Danbury Hospital

As many know, being the caregiver for a spouse, loved one, or friend can be stressful. It’s often a frightening time with so much information to process, and medical appointments and hospital visits to manage. The role often leaves little time for self-care. Many caregivers struggle physically, emotionally, or spiritually at some point during their journey. At the same time, hospital staff are caregivers, too, and need safe ways and places to help process the loss of a patient or a particularly difficult case.

Recognizing this, Danbury Hospital—with the help of generous donors—established The Goldstone Caregiver Center, where those in the caregiving role can find quiet rooms for reflection or private conversation, all designed in soothing colors, to help decompress. There’s also a stocked

kitchenette, where a healthy snack or a cup of hot tea can help recharge the body and spirit. The center offers computer workstations for internet or email access, copier, telephones and fax services and access to a library specializing in caregivers’ resources. All at no cost and with the caregiver in mind.

The hospital offers professional counseling with a licensed clinical social worker and volunteer Caregiver Coaches who are trained to support families. There are support groups, educational programs, end-of-life support, and listings of community resources—all free of charge. Visitors can join a Grief Support Group that offers a step-by-step action program for moving beyond death, divorce, and other losses. While being a caregiver can be incredibly rewarding, it can also be one of the most difficult and isolating times a person may experience. Those caring for a family member and experiencing frustration, sadness, guilt, or anxiety along their caregiving journey, need to know they are not alone. Danbury Hospital encourages caregivers in our community to take the opportunity to meet others, share experiences, and learn strategies to reduce stress. Patients, families and staff are welcome to stop by, enjoy a cup of coffee, and find ways to positively manage through their most difficult times.

DAY KIMBALL HEALTHCARE

Cancer Survivorship in the Quiet Corner

The Quiet Corner of Connecticut is known for many things—antiquing, beautiful foliage, the Boxcar Children’s Museum—but it is also home to a shocking number of financially challenged and food-insecure residents. Almost 25% of people in Windham County are living below the poverty line—more than double the state average.

The Rose Bove LaRose Cancer Center at Day Kimball Hospital offers a 360-degree program that considers every aspect of a patient’s life. From physical wellness to diet and financial counseling, it provides a holistic approach to both treatment and survivorship.

Over the past year, Day Kimball Healthcare (DKH) has made enhancements to its cancer survivorship program. During remission, survivors are provided with programs and resources to help improve their quality of life and broaden their understanding of health in survivorship. Some of these programs include online nutrition and physical activity video libraries, food assistance programs, support groups, and community events that aim to bring cancer survivors closer together.

In 2021, DKH’s oncology registered dietitian, Caitlyn Sward, produced a video series educating cancer patients on the basics of macro- and micro-nutrients, the importance of fiber and fluid, nutrition and its impact on long-term health conditions, and ways to avoid misinformation surrounding cancer nutrition.

A newly developed “cancer survivorship page” on DKH’s website also features a physical activity video series, providing free exercise tutorials to cancer survivors and teaching physiology and appropriate workouts to perform after cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Survivors who identify as food insecure can also receive nutrition support through “Caitlyn’s Cupboard,” a hospital-based food pantry located in the cancer center. Sward schedules pantry appointments with each patient to help them select foods tailored to their specific treatment plan, health needs and dietary requirements. Each person receives a three-day supply of food for each member of the family, including staple items and healthy snacks, as well as nutritional information, healthy recipes, and a comprehensive list of local food assistance programs and other community resources.

DKH has also teamed up with its local YMCA to address the mental health needs of cancer survivors through the LiveStrong Program. This national cancer patient exercise program works alongside DKH’s oncology nurse navigator to offer free monthly support groups to survivors.

Throughout the physical, emotional, and financial challenges that accompany a cancer diagnosis, DKH’s Rose Bove LaRose Cancer Center guides patients through their treatment and provides multidisciplinary care throughout survivorship – preventing and catching cancer recurrences, addressing malnutrition and food insecurity, and meeting the mental health needs of the Quiet Corner’s most vulnerable people.

CONNECTICUT CHILDREN’S

The Health Impact of Housing

Andrea Bailey and her three children settled into their home in Hartford unaware that it contained asbestos, mold, lead, and other hazards that could threaten their health. Once they realized the extent of the concerns, they turned to Connecticut Children’s Healthy Homes Program (Healthy Homes) for help.

Healthy Homes is part of Connecticut Children’s Office for Community Child Health, which supports families and communities in addressing social and environmental factors that affect overall health. As part of its work, Healthy Homes raises awareness about the critical link between housing quality and health, and helps families like the Baileys find and fix health hazards in their homes. The program is funded through federal and state grants.

The work done by Healthy Homes came as a relief to the Bailey family. “I am going to make sure that if I see anybody that’s going to need the help, I’ll refer them to Healthy Homes. I know a lot of people don’t know about this and we need to spread the word,” says Andrea.

At the time a contractor discovered the problems and urged the family to contact Healthy Homes, they were already experiencing significant health



challenges, which increased the urgent need to get things fixed. Among those health challenges, Andrea’s daughter Jenna-Lee, now seven years old, was born with only one valve in her heart and it was leaking, according to Andrea. She underwent open-heart surgery at the age of two and has since fully recovered.

As part of the project, Healthy Homes was able to remove asbestos and mold from the Baileys’

basement and lead from elsewhere in the home—toxins that could have caused long-term health and developmental concerns for the Baileys. In addition to replacing tiles, drywall, and windows, they also added safety bars to the windows in the children’s bedrooms to prevent falls.

The program relocated the Bailey family to a hotel during part of the renovations to avoid exposure to contaminants. Andrea was touched when she heard how Jenna-Lee described the experience: “My family is together and that’s all that matters,” Jenna-Lee told her teacher.

“I’m happy that she understands,” says Andrea.

The Baileys returned home once the work was completed and air quality testing showed it was safe.

Jenna-Lee and her siblings are thrilled to be back in their family home, and Andrea is thrilled to know that it is a safe place for them to grow up.

GREENWICH HOSPITAL

Injury Prevention Programs: Keeping The Community Safe

The mission of the Community Health Department at Greenwich Hospital is to build healthy communities. As part of this effort, Community Health conducted various safety education programs in 2021 aimed at reducing injuries and trauma. Trauma prevention education programs included bike safety to prevent accidents, how to properly install infant and child car seats, and fall prevention through home safety.

Greenwich Hospital partnered with local community agencies

such as the Greenwich YMCA, local bike clubs (Pedal Greenwich), Greenwich Schools, and Police and Fire Departments to co-host multi-faceted, educational events.

Greenwich Police and Greenwich Hospital created a professional online bike safety video illustrating the importance of wearing properly fitted helmets and adhering to the rules of the road, and reviewing bike equipment safety checks (brakes, tires, chains, seat height, etc.). The video is posted on the Greenwich Hospital Community Health website and YouTube. The Greenwich Police Department received a copy of the video to be used for future trainings.

Community Health also attended multiple health fairs sponsored by local bike clubs, Greenwich public schools and the YMCA. In-person educational programs were conducted at these community sites where residents received free helmets and bike lights/

flashers. The free helmets were accurately measured and fitted for each individual based on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration standards.

Greenwich Hospital teamed up with the Greenwich Fire Department and created a video on the importance of properly installing infant and child car seats in a vehicle. This video is posted on the Greenwich Hospital website for easy community access.

In addition, Greenwich Hospital



medical professionals presented numerous community lectures on fall prevention, home safety, and winter and summer safety. These lectures included safety measures to reduce the risk of falling at home by identifying and avoiding hazards.

The goal of all these prevention programs is to keep community residents safe and reduce unnecessary injury and trauma events.

GRIFFIN HEALTH

Griffin Center for Healthy Living Focuses on Community Well-Being

The Griffin Center for Healthy Living at Quarry Walk in Oxford is a unique facility that promotes an active partnership between Griffin Health and its community to improve overall well-being. The center offers free and low-cost health education, support and programs to assist in preventing and managing chronic disease.

The center's spacious and comfortable healing environment features an advanced fitness center, equipped with an AlterG anti-gravity treadmill, private treatment rooms for physical and occupational therapy, a Trackman golf simulator room with specialized physical therapy to recover from injury and improve play, a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen, and a community center with a fully equipped meeting room.

The center embodies Griffin's goal to not only care for individuals when they are ill, but to build a meaningful relationship, to guide, and coach them to prevent illness and maximize their quality of life. Programs at the center focus on the social influences of health—such as socio-economic factors and healthy behaviors—that influence the health status of residents of the Lower Naugatuck Valley. According to the most recent Valley Community Health Index, chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease have consistently ranked among the most common causes for hospitalization and emergency room encounters in the Lower Naugatuck Valley. These conditions can be prevented or managed effectively by adopting healthier habits, especially regular exercise and a nutritious diet.

In addition to the preventive health programs offered at Griffin Hospital, the Center for Healthy Living launched free fitness videos



and hosted free virtual exercise classes for seniors in Oxford to help them stay active during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The center's teaching kitchen—with its advanced video production capabilities—is part of The Teaching Kitchen Collaborative, a national network of organizations using teaching kitchen facilities as catalysts for enhanced personal and public health across medical, community, school, and corporate settings. The center regularly hosts virtual healthy cooking courses and produce nutritional videos on meal prep, ways to add more vegetables into recipes, and healthy twists on soul food classics.

**HARTFORD HOSPITAL
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE**

Neighborhood Health Clinics Build Trust in the City

Visits to Hartford's Park Street by Hartford Hospital's Neighborhood Health team are an ongoing effort requiring patience, compassion, and even comfort food. Twice a month at Mi Casa Hispanic Health Council, the team holds a clinic that includes vaccinations, blood pressure checks, basic urgent care services, and behavioral healthcare.

To help combat health inequity, Hartford Hospital partners with community and faith-based organizations to bring healthcare to underserved communities and educate at-risk residents about the importance of getting vaccinated. Mobile clinics visit several locations regularly, serving the city's neediest individuals, administering more than 3,000 vaccines at various locations throughout the inner city.

The group also fosters relationships, building trust with community members, some of whom are homeless. The power of those relationships came to light in the story of Carlos Gonzalez. Known as "Flacco" on the streets of Hartford, he is a regular visitor to Mi Casa. During his visits, he met and got to know Hartford HealthCare Neighborhood Health personnel.

On his first visit, Flacco adamantly resisted getting the COVID-19 vaccine. The staff kept the interaction light and engaging, resulting in Flacco dropping in more often. Staff recognized Flacco and slowly gained his trust, sharing jokes, high fives, and friendly exchanges. They learned he was recently homeless, and offered snacks and empanadas. He accepted and became more approachable.

Every time the team saw Flacco, in the clinic or on the street,



they asked if he was ready to get vaccinated. He always declined until one day when a conversation in a barber shop turned to the reason for his hesitation. It was money. Flacco believed there was a cost associated with the vaccine. The team reassured him that money and lack of insurance were not issues. He trusted them and promised to return for the vaccine, a deal he sealed with a "pinky swear" with Kelly Toth, APRN, system director of Neighborhood Health. He stayed true to his promise and received the vaccine.

Flacco's story is about trusting healthcare professionals and knowing they had his best interests at heart. When reflecting on a group photo, Toth remarked, "What is extra special for me is that he has his arms around us all – 'embracing' us. This is Neighborhood Health."

THE CHARLOTTE HUNGERFORD HOSPITAL
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Neighborhood Health Initiative Promotes Health Equity

First COVID-19 testing, then vaccine clinics and, in August, familiar locations in Torrington, Winsted and Thomaston became sites for the new Neighborhood Health Program at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, bridging gaps in healthcare access for people who need it most.



Hartford HealthCare (HHC) developed the comprehensive Neighborhood Health Program to help broaden the system's community health outreach efforts by establishing regular community health clinics. The program utilizes two CareVans staffed by a team of nurses, technicians, counselors, and medical support staff making scheduled stops for walk-in indoor clinics in underserved areas.

"We couldn't be more excited to activate our mobile health strategy," said HHC President and CEO Jeffrey Flaks. "This is a good example of how we are already better than normal — committed to leaving no community and no person behind."

A comprehensive array of health and wellness services are available at the bi-monthly clinics to people age 16 and older. These offerings include screenings for conditions such as diabetes, vaccines, behavioral health screenings and referrals, primary and specialty care medical referrals, patient education, counseling, and support.

The clinics and their mission are more important now than ever. Across the state and in all HHC service areas, vulnerable underserved populations face

difficult realities and barriers to obtaining adequate services and access to healthcare. These situations were highlighted and heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keith Grant, HHC Senior System Director of infection prevention, said data long before the pandemic indicated stark differences in life expectancy in Connecticut based on zip code. The pandemic, he explained, further highlighted this disparity.

"Normal is the space we're comfortable in. We're changing that to bring healthcare closer and bridge that gap, so if we experience another pandemic, people will experience it significantly differently," Grant said.

The innovative health clinics were developed in collaboration with trusted community partners throughout the state. These groups and individuals helped determine the health needs and priorities of their residents, made the program design adaptable and flexible to individual community needs, and are open to feedback to ensure access to the most necessary services and programs.



JOHNSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

Emergency Department Collects Clothing and Supplies for Homeless

When they have nowhere else to turn, homeless individuals often seek care in a hospital emergency department. While many of these individuals need clinical intervention and treatment, others may simply be looking for something to eat or a warm place to stay for the night. At Johnson Memorial Hospital, members of the Emergency Department team have undertaken a project to help the homeless with some of their most immediate needs.

Under the direction of Jennifer Foster, RN, Nurse Manager of the Emergency Department, colleagues in the department launched a month-long clothing drive and tent collection effort. Foster was prompted to promote this effort after talking with a Colorado-based colleague about the protocol for discharging homeless patients from hospitals in remote locations. This information, coupled with her knowledge of waiting lists for local community shelters and the understanding that for some homeless people shelters are not a preferred option, because of COVID-19, inspired Foster to take action.

Over the course of one month, Johnson's Emergency Department has collected numerous pairs of shoes, pants, shirts, sweaters, sweatshirts, and coats, as well as tents and sleeping bags. Now, when a homeless patient is discharged from the Emergency Department, they are provided with a tent, a sleeping bag, a backpack to hold their supplies, and some extra clothing to keep them warm—so as to provide them with some sort of shelter and comfort during the cold weather. And, although the collection drive has concluded, members of the community have continued donating items to Johnson.

According to Foster, the Emergency Department will continue to provide this service to homeless patients as long as there is a need for it. They will also schedule additional clothing drives and tent collections when the supply of items must be replenished. In the meantime, Foster is also working with the members of the hospital's Crisis Team to develop ways to go out and deliver items to homeless individuals in the local community.

"Our Mission at Johnson Memorial Hospital calls us to serve as a transforming, healing presence in the local community and this project closely aligns with that directive," said Foster. "The clothing and other items in these 'care packages' will not only make things a little easier for those who receive them, they also let these individuals know that we are thinking about them and their needs. This is what community service is all about."

LAWRENCE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL HOSPITAL
YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

Helping Feed Residents is Part of L+M Hospital's Mission

Throughout the pandemic, Lawrence + Memorial Hospital has lived its mission to enhance the lives of the community it serves by distributing food to those most in need.

New London has the fourth lowest median household income in the state. During the pandemic, food insecurity has grown to almost 40% among its residents.

The New London Food Partnership, which delivers over 10,000 pounds of food to New London families each week, is run by the Health Improvement Collaborative of Southeastern Connecticut (HIC). The HIC includes about 30 community groups, and L+M serves on its leadership committee. Key partners included FRESH New London, Ledge Light Health District and the city of New London.

L+M Community Health Project Coordinator Esther Pendola makes sure that the city's most vulnerable residents receive fresh produce and other nutritious groceries. With the help of other L+M employees and a cadre of volunteers, more than 200 families—approximately 800 to 1,000 people—are served each week. Esther organizes the logistics for distribution and delivery of the food.

"It's exhausting, but it's awesome," Esther says. "It's my favorite part of my job, helping to feed these families."

Early in the pandemic, the program was able to provide a home delivery service to its clients. While that service could not

be maintained, sorting of food supplies from CT Foodshare, The Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, and other donated goods moved to the New London Senior Center.

Preselected packages, based on family size, typically include milk, eggs, frozen meat, fruit, vegetables, starches, and canned goods.

It can get emotional, seeing a family react to a food box, Esther says. "Sometimes the kids will get so excited because we'll give them a favorite cereal," she said. "One tearful woman said she was embarrassed because never in her life did she think she would have to use a service like this. But it's such a basic need, food. You need it as much as you need air, and the fact that she was embarrassed for something so basic was so sad to me."

"For me, having a job that is able to flex based on need and that I'm given the ability to respond quickly to the needs of the community," Esther says. "And to use my social work skills, it reinforces that this is the work I should be doing, and it makes me proud of our organization."

A good community hospital is a proactive player in the ongoing promotion of health and wellness. The mission extends beyond caring for people when they are sick, and only by to improving the lives of our neighbors, friends, and families.

MANCHESTER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEALTH NETWORK

ECHN Manchester Memorial Focuses on Living Better with “Better Being”

Better Being is an online health education website and publication where community members can find health education programs, blogs, health facts, and information on healthy living, including lifestyle tips for the entire family.

It was clear that many people did their homework on healthy living during the pandemic. Traffic to the site and enrollment in the online health education classes increased dramatically in 2021. Members of the Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN) community had many options to increase their health education through our online presentations and classes. The most popular classes were those that focused on naturopathic medicine, improving immunity strength and healthy eating. Two highly attended classes were “Understanding Detox” and “Botanical Medicine for Stress.” The livestream format allowed attendees to learn about these topics in an interactive format with a physician answering questions and clarifying information throughout the presentations. These online presentations gave participants the ability to attend the



classes from virtually anywhere, while still creating a sense of community.

Several classes also included live cooking demonstrations. Although participants could not taste the food, step-by-step instructions and recipes empowered them to recreate the dishes on their own. Classes began by focusing on the various nutrients crucial to a balanced diet. Equipped with the information to make better food choices from the informational portion of the sessions, participants also gained an understanding of technique through the cooking demonstrations.

The “Tasty Table for Health: Healthy

Thanksgiving Plate” class was just in time for the holiday known for over-indulgence. Instructors Jillian Miner and Kristen Loparco, who are lifestyle coaches in the Diabetes Wellness Center at ECHN’s Manchester Memorial Hospital, encouraged participants to rethink their Thanksgiving menu with healthy, nutrient-packed dishes that were lighter and focused on fresh ingredients.

Although some classes have returned to the in-person format, the online experience is one that brings great accessibility to everyone and will continue to be a valued and effective option.

On the website, you’ll discover a variety of health education programs – everything from childbirth classes and parent education to health education lectures to health screenings, there is something healthy for tips and healthful ideas for your whole family. Here you’ll discover a variety of health education programs – everything from childbirth classes and parent education to health education lectures to health screenings, there is something healthy for everyone within.

NORWALK HOSPITAL
NUVANCE HEALTH

Norwalk Hospital Improves Health Access

Norwalk Hospital identified a critical gap in the ability of vulnerable patients to secure safe and reliable transportation for follow-up medical appointments. This gap resulted in missed appointments and medical decline for fragile patients. Through the generosity of a donor, Norwalk Hospital was able to fund an arrangement with a company that assists with securing rides for these patients. Implemented in several of the outpatient areas, staff identify patients who would be unable to attend their outpatient appointments without assistance with transportation. The program arranges transportation for patients with multiple medical support needs, including those requiring wheelchairs and stretchers.

Communication between the patients and the involved medical providers is clear and consistent. Drivers are trained to assist individuals from their homes to the car, which is often a barrier for patients with physical disabilities using other transportation services. The program coordinates with a patient’s payer source, and any outstanding costs are covered by the grant. Patients are highly satisfied with the program and follow-up appointment adherence has greatly improved.

Here are a few patient/staff stories that illustrate the value of this service:

Facilitating regular transportation for elderly patients with complex medical needs

Mr. W was returning home to live with his elderly wife and both required follow-up with their primary care physician. The arrangements were facilitated through Norwalk Hospital’s transportation services program. The primary care visit was set up for Mr. and Mrs. W. During this visit, the physician reviewed medications, made medication adjustments, and

signed homecare orders for the continuation of services. This visit was essential to allow this couple to continue to safely live at home.

Minimizing preventable hospital visits by improving attendance at follow-up appointments

Mr. M had multiple admissions to the hospital for cardiac-related medical issues. He was vulnerable in the community and was being physically abused and financially exploited in his home. His vehicle was nonfunctioning, making it difficult for him to leave his home. Arrangements were made to relocate Mr. M to a medical respite apartment. Transportation for his relocation was facilitated through this program. During his three week stay in the medical respite apartment, Mr. M was successfully transported to multiple post-acute care follow-up appointments with cardiology, urology, and primary care. Most importantly, this diligent follow-up prevented a return to the hospital. Mr. M is no longer living in his prior toxic environment and reports feeling better and safer than he has in a long time.

Enhancing healthcare experiences and increasing autonomy of patients and caregivers through access to safe transportation

Working with a patient’s geriatric care manager, Norwalk Hospital has been able to arrange for a wheelchair ambulette service to transport Mrs. A to her outpatient providers including audiology, dentist, primary care physician and others. Prior to utilizing this program, Mrs. A was unable to see these providers. Mrs. A is happy to be home, and reports how grateful she is that she and her caregivers now have access to safe transportation.

MIDDLESEX HEALTH

Middlesex Works Collaboratively to Address Health Disparities

To align with its Community Health Needs Assessment focus on advancing health equity by addressing the root causes of health disparities, Middlesex Health has adopted a collaborative philosophy for its community health and well-being vision.

In support of strategic, place-based partnerships, Middlesex Health has written several grants over the past two years, securing more than \$2.3 million. This includes grant funding for future years. Health systems are anchor institutions in their service areas. Anchor institutions are defined as not-for-

profit institutions that, once established, do not tend to change locations, providing opportunities to enhance economic stability and growth in their communities. By supporting ongoing community initiatives, Middlesex Health is ensuring that its community benefit programs meet community needs, as defined by community input and voice.

By infusing 100 percent of this grant money into the community and creating community-based jobs, Middlesex Health is helping to advance equitable and inclusive economic development

strategies in meaningful ways. This is important because socioeconomic status and related factors, such as employment, are drivers of health.

The grants secured by Middlesex Health have underwritten 14 different community-based programs that focus on addressing systemic barriers experienced by individuals who are Black, Latino/a, or members of other communities of color with access to quality healthcare services. Each program has been designed, implemented and led by leaders and community members in those communities of color who know best the needs of and solutions for their communities. Partner organizations include the Ministerial Health Fellowship, the Middlesex County NAACP Branch and the Greater Middletown Area Health Enhancement Community Coalition.

In addition to providing support for grant writing, budget

preparation, program design, program implementation, program evaluation and grant reporting, Middlesex Health is an active partner with the organizations overseeing the programs. Grants secured by Middlesex Health have funded: COVID-19 crisis counselors; COVID-19 trusted messengers; behavioral health crisis counselors; recovery coaches; doula and community health workers; an oral health community health worker; generalist community health workers; COVID-19 emergency funding; COVID-19 wellness kits; a Latino/a focus group study; and an adult and family-oriented educational series. These grants have created approximately 18 full-time equivalent positions for a racially and ethnically diverse group of individuals and have enabled Middlesex Health to be a collaborative partner that supports shared goals of advancing health equity.

ROCKVILLE GENERAL HOSPITAL
EASTERN CONNECTICUT HEALTH NETWORK

Rockville’s Screening and Intervention Services Create Positive Change

Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN) is in its 28th year of enrolling women in the Connecticut Early Detection and Prevention Program (CEDPP), which consists of the Connecticut Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (CBCCEDP) and the Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN).

CEDPP provides access to a vast array of screening and prevention services regardless of insurance status. All services are offered free of charge through the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s contracted sites, such as ECHN’s Women’s Center for Wellness. Included services are:

- Office visits
- Breast ultrasounds
- Colposcopies
- Clinical breast exams
- Colposcopy-directed biopsies
- Fine needle aspirations
- Screening and diagnostic mammograms
- HPV screening (human papilloma virus)
- Loop electrode excision procedure (LEEP)
- Pap tests
- Breast biopsies
- Cardiovascular screening
- Surgical consultations

The program not only promotes early detection and screening of disease, but also increases access to education and healthy lifestyle changes that can make positive differences in women’s lives. Georgann Torres, who is a bilingual Community Health Navigator, and Edry O’Dwyer, the Health Systems Navigator, work together to guide women through the program at ECHN, not only ensuring scheduling of their screenings, but also supporting their overall well-being. Initial enrollment visits often focus on underlying issues that influence a woman’s health: food insecurity (including access to healthier food), exercise, and mental health. Georgann and Edry seek to gain an understanding of the woman’s ability to make healthy changes, plus any possible obstacles she may face, like feeling safe to exercise in her own neighborhood. The program provides options for women to incorporate fitness in a safe environment by making referrals to gyms and classes, helping to start an exercise regimen that often leads to healthier routines. Progress is monitored throughout each woman’s experience to ensure she is benefiting from the services and to course correct with new interventions when she is not. Diabetes prevention programs, Weight Watchers, health coaching, self-monitored blood pressure, and mental health referrals round out the cadre of services available.

Donna Cameron, Director of Outpatient Women’s Services and Clinical Navigator for the CEDPP/WISEWOMAN program, remarks that “the ECHN team is thrilled to have been able to provide services to over 6,000 women. Our goal is to not only help women obtain the screening services they need and get them on the path to a healthier lifestyle, but to also aid in empowering women. Healthcare is complicated and we want women to be able to have the tools to navigate the healthcare system, while knowing that we are always a phone call away if they ever need anything.”

SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

Saint Francis Hospital Teaches Community How to STOP THE BLEED®

Some first aid training, including “stop, drop, and roll” for fires, are familiar and recitable by just about everyone. Trauma clinicians at Saint Francis Hospital are working to make STOP THE BLEED® just as recognizable by offering the free training courses, open to all community members.

The STOP THE BLEED® program, a collaborative effort led by the Hartford Consensus and the American College of Surgeons, aims to bring empowerment and education to the public about controlling catastrophic blood loss. The course is intended to teach bystanders how to initiate care for life-threatening bleeding after contacting 911. Most bleeding can be controlled with the steps

taught at the course. Injuries experienced from car crashes, home improvement projects, sports, falls, outdoor activities, or even injuries from violence can all be helped by the simple STOP THE BLEED® methods.

The Saint Francis team of registered STOP THE BLEED® instructors are dedicated to preparing the public to save lives when they encounter severe bleeding. Saint Francis, a Level I Trauma Center, provides STOP THE BLEED® courses to anyone in the community without cost.

“STOP THE BLEED® is incredibly important – bleeding is the number one cause of preventable death after injury,” said David S. Shapiro, MD, MHCM, FACS, Chief Quality Officer and trauma surgeon at Saint Francis Hospital. “The sooner bleeding is stopped, the faster patients get better. STOP THE BLEED® steps should be as familiar as ‘stop, drop, and roll’ or CPR for cardiac arrest.”

On May 20, National STOP THE BLEED Day, in collaboration with the American College of Surgeons Connecticut Chapter, Saint Francis hosted a large-scale STOP THE BLEED® course for all attendees of that evening’s Hartford Yard Goats game. With a goal to train every attendee in the stands, it was among the largest scale STOP THE BLEED® events to date.

Prior to the start of the game, Dr. Shapiro taught the lecture portion of the course to approximately 1,900 people over the video screen. The hands-on portion of the course was taught to a total of 504 people of all ages throughout the night. Saint Francis also provided the Yard



Goats with staff training and their own STOP THE BLEED® station for use at the park.

In 2021, the Saint Francis STOP THE BLEED® team conducted more than 25 training courses in the community, including at the Mandell Jewish Community Center in Bloomfield and at Saint Francis Hospital.

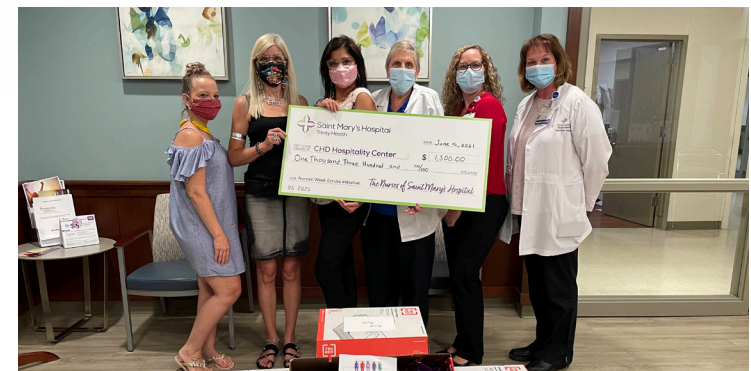
SAINT MARY’S HOSPITAL
TRINITY HEALTH OF NEW ENGLAND

Scrubs and More

As a mission-driven healthcare facility, Saint Mary’s Hospital is called to serve as a compassionate and transforming, healing presence, working to improve the health of communities and each person served. “Commitment to those who are poor” is an institutional value. Integrating that value into the everyday work at the hospital, there are several partnerships and initiatives specifically meant to serve the most vulnerable in the community. Over many years, Saint Mary’s Hospital has consulted and partnered with The Hospitality Center on several initiatives. The Hospitality Center—a service of the Center for Human Development—is a “safe haven for homeless families and individuals.” It is a respite from the outside, providing hot showers, laundry, and computer accessibility. Guests may make phone calls, collect mail, and take shelter from the weather.

The Hospitality Center lies less than a mile from Saint Mary’s Hospital main campus. One of the most recent efforts to support the Hospitality Center was The Scrubs Drive. Held during Nurses Week in May 2021, and facilitated by the Department of Nursing, colleagues collected new and gently used scrubs for clients of the Hospitality Center. Often, these clients come to the Center to shower and wash their clothes but have nothing to wear during that time. It was determined that scrubs would be a great solution to that problem.

The Hospitality Center’s role is an important one, not only providing basic needs to the homeless, but also serving as a conduit for community healthcare entities working with that population. For example, Waterbury’s Community Care Team (CCT), facilitated by the Greater Waterbury Health Partnership, is comprised of local hospital staff and community service providers, including mental health and substance abuse treatment providers, community health centers, city social services, faith-based organizations, shelters, and housing agencies. The goal of the Community Care Team is to wrap services around these patients, marshaling community resources necessary to address not just their health needs, but also the other barriers preventing them from achieving better health. Saint Mary’s Hospital is a partner with the CCT and that partnership has given Saint Mary’s another way to strengthen our relationship with the Hospitality Center. In addition to the CCT, Saint Mary’s colleagues also conduct various other initiatives to directly benefit the homeless via the Hospitality Center. Much like the Scrubs Drive,



other outreach efforts have included collection and donation of socks, underwear, sweatpants, and sweatshirts, as well as sleeping bags. We’ve held Christmas parties and given gifts.

Robin Cracco, RN, BSN is Saint Mary’s Community Care Team representative, who has also worked with this vulnerable population as an ED nurse and through her outreach and connection with the Hospitality Center. She is continuously inspired by the efforts of all those who serve this community and the visible impact the work makes, “to see how all the little things we do and the services we provide help the clients succeed and move toward independence is amazing.”

ST. VINCENT'S MEDICAL CENTER
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE



Medical Mission at Home Offers Vital Services to Vulnerable in Community

For the past seven years, St. Vincent's Medical Center has served its most vulnerable community members in Bridgeport through its Medical Mission at Home.

"Medical mission" often refers to volunteer caregivers who travel to other countries providing medical services. St. Vincent's Medical Mission at Home delivers healthcare, and social and support services to neighbors in need right in its own community.

Medical Mission at Home has historically been held in November at a Bridgeport school. Nearly 400 volunteer medical staff and colleagues offer medical exams, vaccinations, foot washing and podiatry services, mental health wellness services, and connections to community providers. All services are free for individuals 18 and older. No insurance is needed. The care is not limited to that one day, however, as individuals are offered follow-up appointments, as needed. On average, nearly 300 individuals are served during the event.

As with many in-person events in 2020, Medical Mission at Home was postponed due to COVID-19. Determined to maintain its commitment to the community, St. Vincent's adapted by holding a smaller version in the summer of 2021. While the event served fewer people than in most years due to the pandemic, the services provided were essential to those who attended and contributed positively to their health status in multiple ways.

This truly was a testament to the commitment of St. Vincent's and the volunteers to the greater Bridgeport community. The seventh annual Medical Mission at Home was held November 6, 2021.

St. Vincent's has proudly served the greater Bridgeport community as a Catholic hospital for more than 115 years and serves all who need care, regardless of their ability to pay. Medical Mission at Home is an even deeper demonstration of the Hartford HealthCare values to which St. Vincent's is committed—doing what's best, kind, right, just, and safe, to improve the health and healing of the people and communities the hospital serves.



SHARON HOSPITAL
NUVANCE HEALTH

Partnering for Primary Care in Northwestern Connecticut

To enhance access to non-critical care services, Sharon Hospital has cultivated a collaborative, long-term partnership with the Community Health & Wellness Center (CHWC) in Torrington, Connecticut—a federally qualified health center (FQHC)—to offer a new approach to affordable and high quality healthcare services and treatment for the communities of northwestern Connecticut.

Twice weekly, the center's Mobile Medical Unit—"Betty: Bringing Exceptional Treatment To You"—is stationed at Sharon Hospital to offer a range of primary care-focused services, such as medical screenings, point-of-care testing, vaccinations, referrals, and education.

This initiative places a special emphasis on:

- Expansion of primary care service access among vulnerable and underserved populations
- Addressing social disparities, healthcare inequities and lack of primary care access and other common barriers impacting rural communities
- Creating a flexible, direct-to-consumer care delivery model to manage the treatment of a diverse patient population

This collaborative effort bridges the support and expertise of regional medical teams to strengthen and evolve future population health initiatives across the region with a mission to deliver affordable, quality healthcare services that drive positive patient outcomes.

STAMFORD HEALTH

Stamford Health Provides Education On Proper Nutrition

Stamford Health knows from its most recent Community Health Needs Assessment that low-income Stamford residents have the highest rates of obesity and are most likely to report not having access to affordable healthy food. To address these healthcare concerns and disparities, Stamford Health instituted several programs in 2021 to help educate Stamford residents on nutrition and to increase access to healthy food.

To increase education about proper nutrition at an early age, Stamford Health worked with pediatric populations primarily through two programs. First, it implemented a pediatric medical nutrition therapy program to identify and manage children's

specific nutritional needs. Following an assessment, dietitians work with families and children to establish goals and a plan of care, including improvement of lifestyle habits and follow-up visits to monitor progress and outcomes. Treatment ranges from a few dietary modifications to longer-term care and management. Second, Stamford Health employs a dietitian who works in Stamford's public middle and high schools in collaboration with the Federally Qualified Health Center that manages most of Stamford's school-based health clinics. The dietitian meets one-on-one with approximately 50 referred students every year for nutrition counseling.

Next, Stamford Health worked to increase access to healthy foods through two programs. For more than ten years, Stamford Health and Charter Oak Communities (Stamford's public housing authority) have jointly funded an organic farm that is located on the southern perimeter of Stamford Health's Bennett Medical Center Campus. In addition to regular, annual funding, Stamford

Health provided a substantial gift to the farm to ensure neighbors in need could access free, healthy produce. Stamford Health staff, along with area officials, leaflet neighbors to make sure they know about this benefit. Second, in collaboration with the United Way of Western Connecticut, Stamford Health supported patients facing food insecurity by providing 200 qualifying patients with debit cards upon hospital discharge that can be used in select area grocery stores to purchase healthy foods.

"We know that good health is about more than just healthcare," said Ben Wade, Senior Vice President of Strategy & Marketing at Stamford Health. "We work effectively by harnessing partnerships—such as those we have forged with Stamford Public Schools and through the Vita Health & Wellness Initiative—to improve the health of our community. We are thrilled that these innovative and dignified programs increase access to healthy foods and educate the community on nutrition and obesity."

UCONN JOHN DEMPSEY HOSPITAL

Changing the Lives of Sickle Cell Patients

UConn John Dempsey Hospital is home to the New England Sickle Cell Institute, advancing care and providing access to the latest clinical trial research and experimental therapies to sickle cell patients in Connecticut and beyond.

The Institute is a unique, dedicated outpatient regional center for managing the painful inherited red blood cell condition. The program, founded and directed by Biree Andemariam, MD, in 2009, now serves more than 300 Connecticut sickle cell patients, as well as patients from other states.

Monica Aiken, 34, of Middletown, takes two tablets once-a-day of the promising experimental drug IMR-687, as part of an ongoing global sickle cell clinical trial led by

Dr. Andemariam. The pill is helping Monica and other patients like her to better manage their sickle cell disease, reduce their pain, and improve their daily quality of life. The pill works by decreasing painful blood vessel blockages. Sickle cell patient's red blood cells are abnormally sickle—or crescent-shaped, which leads to these painful episodes.

More than 3.5 million are affected by sickle cell disease worldwide, including approximately 100,000 Americans, and in Connecticut, at least 1,000 adults and 600 children. Black and Latino/a people are disproportionately affected in the U.S.

"Sickle cell is a rare, orphan disease affecting underrepresented minority communities in our country, and there needs to be more research dollars dedicated to finding new therapies and a universal cure, along with more advocacy for this fragile and suffering patient population," stresses Dr. Andemariam.

Monica was first diagnosed with sickle cell disease as an infant. Monica met

Dr. Andemariam at a patient support group meeting. With better outpatient management, Monica's time spent suffering has been reduced significantly.

"Dr. Andemariam and her ongoing research studies have changed my life," says Monica. "It helps lessen my pain crises. I am able to work more and do more things." Dr. Andemariam is always educating to reach more people who need help. She does ongoing community outreach at civic and church organizations to identify more adults with sickle cell with the help of the local chapter of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America.

"The impact of IMR-687 on several pain-related parameters is an exciting development for the treatment of sickle cell disease," says Dr. Andemariam. "Pain is the leading cause of emergency room visits and morbidity in sickle cell disease. It is not only excruciating to endure, but disrupts people's lives and dreams. A reduction in pain is ultimately the most meaningful measure of clinical benefit to this patient community."

WATERBURY HOSPITAL

Waterbury HEALTH Teams up with City to Reduce Substance Misuse

In August 2021, Waterbury HEALTH partnered with the city of Waterbury Overdose Response Technician (ORT) team to provide support for patients struggling with opioid use disorder.

In response to Waterbury’s opioid overdose epidemic, the city’s program launched on August 3, with the team working closely with Waterbury Hospital and Waterbury HEALTH crisis and behavioral health providers to support the patients. The ORT team held in-service trainings at Waterbury Hospital with leadership from the

Waterbury Hospital Emergency Department, Addiction Services, and crisis teams in order to provide critical support to patients.

The addition of the ORTs has afforded the city and first responders an opportunity to offer overdose patients with a warm hand off. With a warm hand off, overdose patients are in direct contact with an ORT, either at the scene of the overdose or at the hospital emergency department. ORTs work with overdose survivors to determine what resources they need or want. In the first full month of operation, the team worked with 17 overdose patients, with increasing numbers of patients helped each month.

The grant-funded program is slated to receive state and federal dollars until at least 2022. The success of the program is not focused on a single goal. It includes education, reduction in death, recovery, as well as mental health.

Waterbury HEALTH has been providing behavioral health and

addiction services to the community for decades. In 2020 the Center for Behavioral Health cared for 8,393 persons.

Waterbury HEALTH offers outpatient addiction services to patients at our 88 Grandview location on the Waterbury Hospital Campus. Services include Open Access and other resources.

Addiction often co-occurs with other behavioral health concerns. An initial comprehensive evaluation assesses for a wide range of problems and disorders in addition to substance use disorder. An individualized treatment plan is then developed together with the patient to address all areas of concern.

Waterbury HEALTH teams use a multidisciplinary approach that is critical to an individual’s success in returning to family, workplace, and society through services that promote abstinence and a non-drug-using lifestyle.



WINDHAM HOSPITAL
HARTFORD HEALTHCARE

Healthy Beginnings Supports New Mothers, Babies

Weeks before giving birth to her first child, 20-year-old Heidi Garcia Gonzalez had intermittent running water in her home, was unsure if she would have enough food, and lacked confidence in her ability to succeed as a new mom. Her anxieties eased when she was referred to Hartford HealthCare’s Healthy Beginnings program, part of Windham Hospital’s Women’s Health Center. The program brings information and support to new moms through home visits and connects them to community resources.

“I was scared and had a lot of mixed feelings,” Gonzalez said, holding her sleeping son, Derian, in her sister’s Willimantic home. “Now, I’m happy. Everything about this program is good—it helped me learn about things I didn’t know about.”

During home visits by Community Health Nurse Michele Brezniak, Gonzalez received prenatal and postpartum care from bilingual Nurse Midwife Erin Bane and education on:

- Healthy eating before and after birth
- The importance of sleep
- Postpartum depression
- Breast feeding
- Poison prevention
- Water safety
- Finances
- Health insurance
- Housing
- Heating assistance
- Food assistance

“I feel very blessed,” said Gonzalez, who works for a sports net manufacturer in Colchester. “Everyone has been so helpful. They have made me feel so comfortable.”

She was the first mom to take part in Healthy Beginnings, which is open to anyone who receives care at the Windham Women’s Health Center, no matter where they give birth.

“The timeframe after birth can be the most sleepless, beautiful, crazy time of your life,” Brezniak said. “What isn’t spoken about is how hard and isolated it can be. New moms face many pressures beginning the moment they find out they are expecting. It can be hard to navigate the time period after birth even if a mom has gone through it before. We noticed women in our area feel they are unsuccessful connecting to services they need or are unaware of the services offered. That’s where we come in. We want to help ease the burden on new moms, and set them up for success.”

The first visit a week after the baby is born includes a community health worker and community health nurse, who work to identify any needs the mom may have and help her obtain services. Follow-up visits are scheduled six weeks later to check on progress and identify any barriers.

“We want to be able to empower women, and make sure they have everything they need to be successful,” Brezniak said. “I love being able to offer that motherly nursing advice we all sometimes need as new moms. Knowledge is power—the more you have, the better off you will be at taking care of yourself and your child.”

YALE NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL
YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

Fresh, Healthy Food Can Make a Real Difference

Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH) conducted a healthy food drive from December 2020 – February 2021 as part of a system-wide virtual food drive. The goal was to gather fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and other healthy food items to help hunger relief organizations during the winter months, a time when donations drop. Donating food to food drives is one of the most popular forms of giving in the U.S. However, traditional food drives can be limited to non-perishable donations, and often are not able to accommodate more nutritious fresh foods. Typically, YNHH departments and staff generously give to food pantries through traditional food drives, during which staff bring in food and leave it in donation boxes. Spurred by the restrictions of COVID-19, YNHH found an even better solution, offering #GiveHealthy as an alternative.



#GiveHealthy is an organization that provides an online platform for hunger-relief organizations to set up “registries” listing items they need, healthy, non-perishable and fresh foods alike. Through a collaboration with the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement and the Coordinated Food Assistance Network, YNHH employees, departments, and medical staff supported 11 hunger-relief organizations in Greater New Haven. One such organization was Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS). Upon receipt of their delivery, IRIS

commented, “As the cold weather lingers during this pandemic, resources remain stretched to the limit. More and more people come to the IRIS food pantry every week. We are now regularly seeing well over 320 visitors each week. The donations from this drive will go a long way to helping us keep our pantry bags full of fresh and nutritious food. Thank you for supporting so many families in this very uncertain time.”

Yale New Haven Hospital collected nearly 8,200 lbs. of food during three months of the #GiveHealthy drive. Because the food was shipped from suppliers directly to hunger-relief organizations, donors were able to purchase healthy food items, including fresh produce. Individuals struggling with food insecurity also face higher rates of diet-related health issues—things like obesity and diabetes—due to a lack of access to healthy food. Our goal from the beginning, aligned with the hospital’s Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Strategies and the HealthyCT2020 State Health Improvement Plan, was to address food insecurity in our communities, and this online solution has provided a way for that donated food to be healthier.

Yale New Haven Health’s #GiveHealthy food drive was a system-wide collaboration among Community Health Improvement, Community and Government Relations, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Human Resources, Marketing and Communications, NEMG, and Food and Nutrition. Across the health system a total of 22,550 lbs. of healthy food was donated to 17 beneficiary hunger relief organizations. The health system conducted its second #GiveHealthy food drive during the 2021-2022 holiday season.

FEBRUARY 2022 COMMUNITY BENEFIT REPORT

About the Connecticut Hospital Association

The Connecticut Hospital Association has been dedicated to serving Connecticut's hospitals and health systems since 1919. Through state and federal advocacy, CHA represents the interests of Connecticut's hospitals on key healthcare issues in the areas of quality and patient safety, access and coverage, workforce, community health, health equity, and hospital reimbursement.

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