

# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

Backus Hospital  
Hartford Hospital  
MidState Medical Center  
The Hospital of Central Connecticut  
Windham Hospital

Hartford  
HealthCare  
Cancer Institute

Member, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance

# Plus

+



# A year of growth

*Building on a forged alliance, clinical trials, new cancer center and more*

**T**he Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute marked 2015 as a year of significant and unprecedented growth, highlighted with the opening of a new cancer center in New Britain, refined strate-

gic development, nationally recognized achievements, and initiation of Memorial Sloan Kettering cancer clinical trials — a focal point of charter membership in the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance.

“2015 was a remarkable year for the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute,” said Donna Handley, the Institute’s Vice President of

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Operations. “Our team of physicians and staff worked collaboratively to advance our system as a premier provider of cancer services for our cancer patients in our communities.”

Through the Alliance, Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute patients have access to world-renowned standards of care for six common types of cancer: breast, colorectal, kidney, lung, prostate and uterine. Supporting this initiative are site-specific teams of oncologists, surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, nurses, researchers and others who meet weekly to collaboratively discuss new patients.

In addition, by year’s end the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute was offering Memorial Sloan Kettering trials focusing on gynecologic cancer, urothelial cancer, breast cancer and multiple myeloma. The Memorial Sloan Kettering trials provide new insights into genomic and molecular oncology and run parallel to the more than 100 clinical trials Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute researchers are already participating in that explore cancer screening, diagnosis, treatment and support.

## A new cancer center

In New Britain, cancer patients can access clinical trials at the new home of Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at The Hospital of Central Connecticut, which opened its doors to patients in March.

The Cancer Center, at 183 North Mountain Road, offers radiation therapy; medical, surgical and gynecologic oncology; an infusion center; physical therapy and rehabilitation; nurse navigation; a research and learning center; a boutique and gift shop; and a nature trail and reflection garden. The Cancer Center is located in a stone-inlaid building that covers more than 140,000 feet and includes the adjoining Medical

Arts Center with the HOCC Imaging Center and Comprehensive Breast Health Center and physician offices.

“We are very pleased to be offering this new and comprehensive cancer center that provides a wide range of services for our patients in one convenient location for the Greater New Britain community,” said Kristoffer Popovitch, RT(R), MBA, Central Region director for the Institute, which includes The Hospital of Central Connecticut and MidState Medical Center cancer centers.

## Using Lean tools

The Cancer Institute’s advancement in care standardization and process optimization continued in 2015 through further development of its pillar structure and Disease Management Teams (DMTs), each using the Lean management system.

“The Lean framework addresses strategic focus and rapid deployment of strategic initiatives, enabling us to be more responsive to patient needs and helping us align our efforts systemwide with one standard of care,” said Mohamed Saleh, ME, MSTM, CSSBB, senior Lean Sensei, director, Hartford HealthCare.

DMTs provide a structure to develop guidelines and standardize cancer care across all Hartford HealthCare hospitals. Created in 2014, they focus on thoracic, gastrointestinal, gynecologic, breast, genitourinary and hematologic oncology. Each DMT includes one or more physician leader from each hospital serving in an advocate role and providing a vital link between the DMT and hospital specialists for that disease; and partners with Memorial Sloan Kettering DMTs to further improve quality, reduce variation and increase accruals to cancer clinical trials.

Working parallel to the DMTs are the Cancer Institute’s 25 pillars that support implementation of care standards and processes systemwide. The pillars, which meet monthly, include pharmacy, research, radiation oncology, medical oncology, navigation, genetics, and outreach/education.

## National achievements

The many Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute successes in 2015 included national and local recognitions. In mid-May, more than 100 physicians, staff and Cancer Institute leaders came together at the new cancer center at The Hospital of Central Connecticut to celebrate with Elliot Joseph, president and CEO of Hartford HealthCare, as he presented the 2014 Commission on Cancer (COC) Outstanding Achievement Awards in recognition of the cancer programs at Hartford Hospital and The Hospital of Central Connecticut.

The two programs were among 75 cancer programs nationwide to receive the 2014 Outstanding Achievement Award from the COC, the accrediting arm of the American College of Surgeons. The COC bestowed the award on just 15 percent of cancer programs surveyed. It is given to cancer programs which deliver a consistently excellent level of care across a wide range of standards.

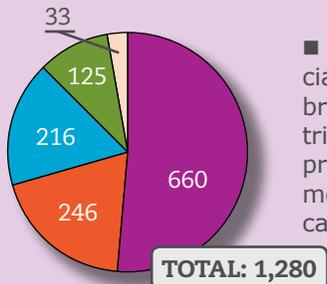
At this event Handley also recognized Windham Hospital, which had recently received its first full accreditation from the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer after a comprehensive review of the program’s staff and services.

During the May award presentation Joseph said, “We are leading the way in bringing the very best care to cancer patients across our state, and this occasion is a sign of just how well you are all doing your job.”

## ADVANCING OUR CARE

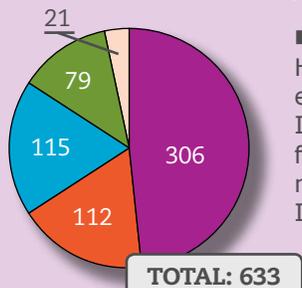
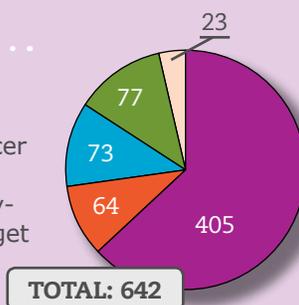
The five most common types of cancer treated by teams of specialists at Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute are cancer of the bladder, breast, colon, lung and prostate. Each patient has a unique scenario requiring a personalized plan. Among the Cancer Institute's selected advances in caring for these cancers:

### 2014 TOP FIVE SITES FOR HARTFORD HEALTHCARE CANCER INSTITUTE



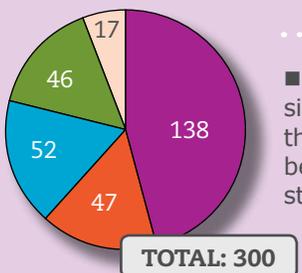
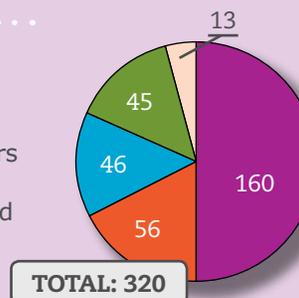
■ **Breast cancer:** Working collaboratively with gynecologic oncology clinicians, the breast cancer team developed guidelines for genetic testing for breast and ovarian cancers. In addition, two Memorial Sloan Kettering clinical trials were opened for patients whose breast cancers overexpress the HER-2 protein. The Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute also initiated a systemwide monthly multidisciplinary breast conference to discuss complex breast cancer cases with experts from all five hospitals in addition to weekly cancer conferences at each hospital.

■ **Prostate cancer:** Through the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance a prostate cancer clinical trial will soon begin and focuses on men with an advanced stage of prostate cancer known as castrate resistant prostate cancer with metastasis. This develops after a patient's condition is unresponsive to typical treatment of hormone manipulation; traditional treatment involves cytotoxic chemotherapy. The clinical trial will study use of a novel agent to target and manipulate androgen receptors toward improving treatment response.



■ **Lung cancer:** A significant advance related to lung cancer care at the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute is evaluation of all new lung cancer cases for specific molecular abnormalities or "weaknesses" for which the Cancer Institute's clinical team is now using a newer, targeted medication that has fewer side effects than more traditional chemotherapy. These advances were made possible from our alliance with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. In addition, for many patients, two recently FDA-approved medications can be very effective in harnessing the immune system to attack lung cancer, often with fewer side effects than traditional chemotherapy.

■ **Colon cancer:** As part of the colon cancer care algorithm at the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute, patients are screened for Lynch syndrome, the most common hereditary syndrome leading to colon cancer. The Cancer Institute also places a priority on personalized care and tests patient's tumors for molecular changes to avoid ineffective and potentially harmful therapy. Surgical techniques for early stage colon cancer include laparoscopic-assisted colectomy, leading to quicker recovery without compromising cure rates



■ **Bladder cancer:** Current treatment for most patients with muscle invasive bladder cancer involves chemotherapy followed by surgical removal of the bladder. In large clinical trials this combined approach has been shown to be more beneficial compared to only surgery, and is currently considered the standard of care. Similarly, for certain patients with cancer of the renal pelvis or ureter, Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute is participating in a clinical trial with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

TOTAL BY HOSPITAL	Hartford Hospital	Hospital of Central Connecticut	Backus Hospital	Midstate Medical Center	Windham Hospital	TOTAL CASES
	1,669	525	502	372	107	3,175



A team of 12 staff from MidState Medical Center turned out to walk and support the Meriden-Wallingford Relay for Life held May 29 at Sheehan High School, Wallingford. The MidState team (from left): Dr. Gary Tansino; Mary Smullen, RN; Wendy Gardner, medical administrative associate; Carolina Starr-Manning, RN; Karen Pierce, RN; LaTonya Lewis, medical administrative associate; Leslie Martinez, medical administrative associate and her daughter.

# 2015: A year of many successes



Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute staff members at all cancer centers took part in Dress in Blue Day in March. The month calls attention to Colorectal Awareness Month by the wearing of blue and encouraging others to be screened for colorectal cancer. Here, nursing staff on the family birthing floor of Backus Hospital show their support.



The Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital installed a new Varian Truebeam linear accelerator. The real-time imaging capabilities and the higher dose rate of the Truebeam provide delivery of higher doses in a shorter time. A similar new unit was installed at the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at The Hospital of Central Connecticut, and a new linear accelerator with similar technology is planned at the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Backus Hospital.



The spacious and welcoming Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at The Hospital of Central Connecticut was dedicated at a June 16 ribbon-cutting ceremony. Pictured are (from left) Elliot Joseph, president and CEO, Hartford HealthCare; Erin Stewart, mayor of the City of New Britain; Lucille Janatka, senior vice president, Hartford HealthCare and president, The Hospital of Central Connecticut and MidState Medical Center; Francine Shanfield, cancer survivor; Donna Handley, vice president of Operations, Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute; Dr. Kristen Zarfos, surgical director, The Hospital of Central Connecticut Comprehensive Breast Health Center; and Katherine Pugliese, chairwoman of the Town Council, Town of Plainville.



Dr. William Culviner administers a head and neck examination to a patient at the Windham Hospital Family Health Center during a free spring clinic. East Region Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute programs provided free head and neck cancer screenings for 144 people last spring at Windham and Backus hospitals.



Barbara Gaughan, RN (thoracic and hematological cancers), is one of 11 nurse navigators across the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute who guide and support cancer patients, from cancer diagnosis through the end of cancer treatment. Nurse navigators are at each Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute cancer center and all work to coordinate patient care based on each patient's individual preferences. Connecting to a nurse navigator is as simple as making one phone call to Hartford HealthCare's toll-free Cancer Connect line at 855.255.6181.



Jean Cretella, left, with Elizabeth Churchill, RD, a dietitian at the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital who helped Cretella with her treatment and rehabilitation. Cretella was treated for cancer of the head and neck and later received a second diagnosis. When complications required her to have her teeth removed, Churchill guided Cretella with a change in her diet from solids to liquids during treatment. She also suggested Cretella join the Livestrong Program, a YMCA-sponsored program that offers rehabilitation and team exercises and activities to active patients and survivors.



Oncologist Dr. Rajani Nadkarni, of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at MidState Medical Center, was honored with the Connecticut Hospital Association's 2015 Healthcare Hero Award. The nomination reflected her many achievements, including pioneering genetic counseling and cancer risk-assessment services.

## Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance marks first year

The one-year anniversary last fall of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute as the charter member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Cancer Alliance highlighted the many opportunities this partnership brings, namely strengthening of Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute's cancer care and creating new opportunities for physicians and patients alike.

The Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute comprises cancer programs at Hartford HealthCare's five hospitals. Memorial Sloan Kettering, based in New York City, is one of the world's foremost cancer centers. The alliance was established to rapidly bring advances in cancer care to patients being treated in community hospitals that have demonstrated a commitment to delivering the highest quality cancer care and a commitment to bringing clinical trials to the patients in their community.

This affiliation has led to extensive collaboration and communication between Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute physicians and their Memorial Sloan Kettering counterparts. This is especially helpful when a case is unusual or a patient wants a second opinion. "Having access to internationally recognized oncologists for a rapid second opinion is a wonderful attribute of our relationship," said Dr. Andrew Salner, medical director of Hartford Hospital cancer center.

Dr. Dinesh Kapur, medical director of Backus Hospital cancer center, noted, "Each and every hospital in our network (Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute) is already providing cutting-edge care, and now we will be able to share MSK's extensive basic science and clinical research

capabilities to offer highly specialized therapies, such as targeted/ personalized therapies, genomic/ proteomics and stem cell therapies."

Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute and Memorial Sloan Kettering will share the care of selected patients receiving specialized therapies such as bone marrow or stem cell transplant. "The transplants will be done at Memorial," Kapur said, "but the rest of the care will be provided in the patients' communities, at one of the five network hospitals, in collaboration with Memorial."

Memorial Sloan Kettering physicians take part in Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute's monthly cancer case conferences, where individual cases are discussed. Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute's multidisciplinary disease management teams (DMTs), which focus on six of the most common cancers (thoracic, gastrointestinal, gynecologic, breast, genitourinary and hematologic), routinely interact with corresponding DMTs at Memorial Sloan Kettering to develop guidelines for care. The two institutions also collaborate on medical education in a bidirectional way.

"The participation of a world-renowned oncologist like Dr. Leonard Saltz of Memorial Sloan Kettering in our gastrointestinal cancer conferences is invaluable," said Dr. W. Jeffrey Baker, medical director of the Windham Hospital cancer center. "The exchange of ideas is always productive and his insights

provide an important perspective on some of our most difficult cases."

The alliance recently held its first joint symposium — on genomic oncology — at Memorial Sloan Kettering. Its surgical fellows now receive robotics training and certification at Hartford HealthCare's Center for Education, Simulation and Innovation, a nationally recognized learning center.

The chance to collaborate on research was one of the main reasons Hartford HealthCare sought to partner with Memorial Sloan Kettering.

Dr. Gary Tansino, medical director of MidState Medical Center cancer center, said "access to early phases of clinical trials is one of the biggest benefits to patients," because they can be treated with promising therapies that may not be generally available for years.

So far, five Memorial Sloan Kettering clinical trials have been approved and are accruing patients from Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute. Approximately 10 more are in the pipeline and are likely to be approved in the next few months. These are in addition to the 100 or so Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute trials already underway.

"Memorial Sloan Kettering has a tremendous number of clinical research trials," said Dr. Peter Byeff, medical director of The Hospital of Central Connecticut cancer center. "The ability to put our patients on MSK cancer trials is a huge benefit of our affiliation."



**Dr. Dinesh Kapur**



**Dr. Andrew Salner**



**Dr. W. Jeffrey Baker**



**Dr. Gary Tansino**



**Dr. Peter Byeff**

## Three directors working in tandem for growth

**K**ristoffer Popovitch, RT-(R), MBA, one of three regional directors for the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute, describes the Cancer Institute as a singular entity — one driven by a unified goal and collegial leadership.

“We’re not five cancer centers — we have one cancer institute with five locations,” said Popovitch, who leads the Central Region which includes The Hospital of Central Connecticut and MidState Medical Center cancer centers. “Our strength is recognized through standardization and personalization by leveraging resources.”

On a daily basis, Popovitch works closely with Abbi Bruce, RN, MS, AOCN, director of Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital; and Fred Bailey, PTA, MA, MBA, director of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Windham and Backus hospitals, which comprise HHC’s East Region. The three are part of a leadership team headed by Donna Handley, vice president of Operations, Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute.

With Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute the charter member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance, the Cancer Institute leadership team works to ensure delivery of a single system of care and access to Memorial Sloan Kettering clinical trials throughout the Cancer Institute.

“Our responsibility as a group of directors is making sure these standards are being implemented consistently. It’s also bridging the relationship with the physicians across the system,” said Bruce, who has worked in oncology for 35 years, including at MidState Medical Center, where she was previously director of oncology services.

Bruce said the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute’s growth and development efforts through managing, strengthening relationships and staff coaching are aimed at building an integrated structure.

### Leadership through Lean and H3W principles

Central to the directors’ leadership is the implementation of Lean and H3W (How Hartford HealthCare Works) operating model used daily systemwide. This includes morning huddles which support integration of the care standards, as well as rounding and standard work observation.

The directors place much emphasis on supporting and leading staff members toward leadership



**Regional Directors for the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute locations include, from left, Kristoffer Popovitch, RT-(R), MBA, Central Region; Abbi Bruce, RN, MS, AOCN, Hartford Hospital; and Fred Bailey, PTA, MA, MBA, East Region.**

behaviors. This includes coaching managers to help in problem solving. As directors, said Bruce, their roles involve being open, flexible, good listeners who are caring and respectful.

“We’re coaching our work group leaders and empowering them to empower the staff,” said Bailey, a certified Lean facilitator with 25 years of healthcare experience including oncology program development. He joined the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute in October, coming from Eastern Connecticut Health Network where he was administrative director of Rehabilitation, Sleep and Employer Services.

One of the benefits of working in a large system is an organized approach, said Popovitch, who joined the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute in 2013 and brings 23 years of health care experience, having previously been executive director of Northeast Regional Radiation Oncology Network.

“We’re encouraging staff in our huddles to constantly think about process and process improvement — how to eliminate waste and improve care,” he said.

The standardized and personalized approach, said Bailey, extends to activities like new staff member orientation. For example, a nurse navigator at one cancer center can help orient a nurse navigator at another cancer center.

As leaders, the directors also have a role in looking at opportunities for the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute. Among these, said Bruce is the opportunity for the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute to “be the flagship cancer provider in the state of Connecticut.”



**Donna  
Handley**

*Vice President  
of Operations,  
Hartford  
HealthCare  
Cancer  
Institute*

## Advancing our strong foundation

This is the time of year for new beginnings, fresh starts and continued advancement for the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute. As a unified cancer institute, we marked 2015 with tremendous progress — opening a new cancer center at The Hospital of Central Connecticut; building on our commitment to cancer care as the charter member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance; implementing a single standard of care systemwide; and initiating clinical trials for our patients.

We continue our work on this solid foundation and this year will prepare for accreditation in 2017 as an integrated Network Cancer Program by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. We will become the first healthcare system in Connecticut to achieve this distinction.

A voluntary accreditation, it would formally acknowledge on a national level our commitment to delivery of a single, unified cancer care system. It would further signify to our patients, physicians and communities our commitment to providing them with one standard of care — the highest standard of quality care — delivered at our cancer

centers at Hartford, Backus, Windham hospitals, MidState Medical Center and The Hospital of Central Connecticut.

The next of several steps, to occur early this year, is launching a systemwide network cancer committee charged with ensuring that we are prepared for the February 2017 two-day survey by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer at two of our cancer centers.

The value in our achievements to date and those moving forward shows through the care we deliver daily as a team to our patients. It's visible through work of our six disease management teams, physician consults with our Memorial Sloan Kettering colleagues, guidance provided patients by our nurse navigators, and the care given to patients at each of our cancer centers. We welcome this New Year and look forward to building on our foundation of a single standard of care for the many communities of patients we serve.