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## About Hartford HealthCare

By the end of 2018, more than 21,000 Connecticut residents will learn they have cancer. In the same period, nearly 7,000 will die of cancer, the second leading cause of death in the United States. The numbers add up to a sobering fact: Nearly every family has been touched by cancer. The statistics also represent an important human challenge. Successfully treating cancer and prolonging patient lives is one of the great endeavors of our time.

At Hartford HealthCare, we are deeply involved in advancing cancer treatment and supporting families across our entire system. As the charter member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance, we are collaborating with one of the world’s best cancer centers to improve treatments, enhance the patient experience and explore technologies that offer new hope to our communities.

In this Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute Outcomes Report, you will see that hundreds of patients across our hospital sites are participating in studies sponsored together with Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

You also will see evidence of our commitment to a single standard of excellence. Our Cancer Institute is at or above state and national performance levels for breast cancer hormone therapy, radiation therapy and needle biopsy as well as early-stage screening and detection for the most common forms of cancer. Our patients are at or above the state average five-year survival rate.

It’s our vision at Hartford HealthCare to be “most trusted for personalized coordinated care.” This outcomes report — and others like it — are part of our effort to share the quality of our work in order to earn the trust of those we are privileged to serve. We stand with cancer patients and their families to provide the best possible care and to work toward a cancer-free future.

Sincerely,

Elliot Joseph
Chief Executive Officer

Jeffrey Flaks
President
Chief Operating Officer

Rocco Orlando III, MD
Senior Vice President
Chief Medical Officer
LEADERSHIP

Peter Paul Yu, MD | Physician-in-Chief
Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute

A nationally recognized leader and innovator in the field, Dr. Yu is a former president of the prestigious American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) who is known for his pioneering work in furthering the role of technology in producing higher quality cancer care and improved outcomes for patients. Over the course of more than 30 years, Dr. Yu has established a reputation for bringing the latest advances in clinical resources and research to community healthcare settings — a key mission of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute.

Before becoming the first Physician-in-Chief of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute in 2016, Dr. Yu was director of cancer research at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation in California, where he was among the first wave of practitioners to convert to an electronic medical record (EMR) for streamlining and maximizing efficiency in clinical record-keeping and data storage — which has since become the standard for best practice in the field. A medical oncologist and hematologist by training, Dr. Yu took advantage of advances in computer technology to enhance patient care by eliminating errors and ensuring that patients received the best course of care to meet their individual needs.

Born and raised in the Northeast, Dr. Yu began his career as a Research Associate and Research Fellow at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. Over the years, he has continued to lead the way in developing and expanding access to the latest in promising new treatments and protocols, especially current trends in research that have led to breakthroughs in areas such as precision oncology and immunotherapy.

As Physician-in-Chief of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute, Dr. Yu plays a leading role in guiding the clinical direction of the Institute’s pioneering membership in the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance — and in fact serves as the Alliance’s Director of Health Informatics. His technological expertise is well known nationally, having twice been elected by Epic Systems users to the Epic Oncology Steering Board. He also sits on the Board of Governors for ASCO’s digital learning system, CancerLinQ.
Kristi Gafford, MBA, MPH, who joined the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute as Senior Vice President of Operations in 2018, is a talented healthcare leader with expertise in managing cancer programs for health systems.

Kristi has held senior leadership positions at a number of distinguished cancer centers, most recently as senior executive director of an oncology joint venture between Orlando Health and the University of Florida Health. She was Administrative Director at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and the University of Missouri Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, both of which underwent significant expansions under her leadership. Kristi is no stranger to Connecticut — she also served as chief of staff and vice president of satellite operations at UConn Health in Farmington.

A native of Missouri, Kristi is a graduate of Duke University and holds an MPH from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health and an MBA from the University of Kansas.
The Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute encompasses comprehensive cancer centers at five hospitals across Connecticut — Hartford Hospital (with a satellite location in Avon), The Hospital of Central Connecticut, Backus Hospital, MidState Medical Center and Windham Hospital. Collectively, the cancer programs within the Cancer Institute treat more than 5,000 new cancer patients per year while caring for tens of thousands of existing patients, offering a full range of innovative, evidence-based and personalized treatments designed to meet the needs of each individual patient.

Our innovative Institute approach is unlike any other in the state and is among the most highly regarded in the nation. Through our Institute, which is organized around a specific disease and not necessarily location, we can apply best practices throughout our system so that patients receive the same high standards of care no matter where they live or which Hartford HealthCare cancer center they choose.

For all of our patients, a dedicated team of oncologists, surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, nurses, clinical researchers, technicians and others collaborate to provide the exact course of care they need. The Institute’s multidisciplinary disease management teams meet and collaborate regularly to lend expertise and insight on numerous cancer types, translating into exceptional coordinated care.

The Institute’s accomplished, fellowship-trained physicians are nationally recognized for their level of sophisticated care in areas such as radiation oncology, medical oncology and surgical oncology. Patients are also cared for in an environment that emphasizes compassion and personal connections, with a team of trained nurse navigators who provide guidance and support to patients and families, from diagnosis to recovery. The Institute also boasts a thriving survivorship program.

In 2013, the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute became the first community-based cancer program to become a member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance, establishing a relationship with one of the world’s premier cancer centers. The Institute’s membership in the Alliance provides patients in Connecticut access to the most advanced, leading-edge treatments available anywhere.

In 2017, the Institute was accredited as a network by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, one of a select few institutes nationwide to be recognized as a system, rather than individual cancer centers.

For patients coming through our doors with a cancer diagnosis, that means three things: standardized care, more options and more hope.
Navigators guide and support our cancer patients, from the moment they are informed of their cancer diagnosis through completion of their cancer treatment. All navigators are experienced oncology nurses who specialize in a different cancer type. The Institute’s Navigation Program consists of experienced nurse navigators at each of the five cancer centers.

Navigators work closely with multidisciplinary physician teams to ensure patients receive the most appropriate care plan. In addition, navigators’ provide educational support to help patients understand their treatment plans, help coordinate care, connect patients to the services they need and offer emotional support.

Our goal is to connect 100 percent of our patients with the appropriate navigator soon after they are diagnosed with cancer.
MEMBERSHIP IN THE MEMORIAL SLOAN KETTERING CANCER ALLIANCE

Four years in: MSK Cancer Center Alliance bringing top clinical trials to patients, research and collaboration for clinicians

More than four years after the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute became the charter member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Cancer Alliance, cancer patients now have unprecedented access to the world’s most advanced clinical trials. And more than ever before, physicians, nurses, pharmacists and researchers are working collaboratively to implement cancer treatment standards and protocols developed at MSK, the premier cancer treatment center in the country.

This distinctive cancer care and clinical research partnership means the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute brings the most innovative, evidence-based cancer care directly into community settings.

“We have strengthened our clinical trials partnership with MSK and have doubled the number of trials we have opened from MSK in the past year,” says Dr. Peter Yu, Physician-in-Chief, Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute. “We are seeing a steady increase in the number of patients who have gone on to trials sponsored by MSK. More than 100 patients have been placed on studies through this program.”

According to Dr. Yu, the Institute has also expanded the variety of cancer types that are covered by its research portfolio including breast, lung, bladder, prostate, kidney, brain, pancreatic, and colon cancer.

“More and more these are based on genomic analysis of the patient’s cancers. We have started, in fact, doing sequencing of cancer samples here at Hartford HealthCare ourselves,” said Yu. “It’s an example of how we are affecting technology transfer from a major academic center to a community system.”

In addition, collaboration and guidance from MSK helped the Institute establish a Cancer Care Innovation Unit at Hartford Hospital, which opened in 2018. The unit will enable Hartford HealthCare to provide Phase I clinical trials to patients.
“Phase I studies are really a necessary part of this research endeavor because they bring the most promising drugs in the development pipeline to our patients,” said Yu. “This does require a very specialized staff as well as specialized facilities. And, it is often beyond the capability of most academic centers. So, the fact that we are able, with the support and guidance of Memorial Sloan Kettering, to open this in Hartford is quite a coup for us.”

Kristi Gafford, Senior Vice President of Operations for the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute, said the Alliance is helping the Institute establish itself as a nationally recognized leader in cancer care.

“The bar in cancer is constantly moving. On a regular basis we’re seeing new therapies come onto the market and new therapies being tested based on genomics and a whole lot of good science. It’s that much more important for us to stay competitive,” said Gafford.

In addition, members of the MSK Cancer Alliance, which has expanded to include Lehigh Valley Health Network and Miami Cancer Institute at Baptist Health South Florida, continuously share research and best practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for patients through multi-disciplinary tumor boards, disease management teams and educational seminars on the latest data, technology and advances. In April of 2018 for example, more than 100 providers from several different specialties, nurses, pharmacists and research staff attended the MSK Cancer Alliance Advanced Prostate Cancer Symposium hosted by the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute and the Tallwood Urology and Kidney Institute. The event brought together in Hartford MSK faculty and Hartford HealthCare general urologists and urologic, radiation and medical oncologists to focus on best practices, and evidence-based decision making in the treatment of advanced prostate cancer.

Yu says the affiliation with MSK has also helped the Institute recruit some of the most talented physicians in the field.

“We’ve added both a melanoma/immuno-oncologist as well as an ocular melanoma surgeon to the organization. We continue to recruit other surgical specialists in areas of breast cancer, thoracic oncology, head and neck, neuro-oncology and surgical oncology along with an increasing list of medical oncologists. And, we have a number of interesting prospects who are in our recruitment pipeline right now. So, that’s very exciting to us,” said Yu.

“When you’re faced with a cancer diagnosis — in some cases a life or death decision — you’re looking for the best care available. In New England, patients have many choices for top-notch cancer care at a reasonable distance from their homes,” said Gafford. “That means we’re competing on a national scale. We have to offer patients the most advanced care so they have options to stay local.”
The Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute offers a complete range of services and clinical trials for all stages and types of breast cancer. Many women are enrolled in one of several collaborative Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) therapeutic trials designed for women who have breast cancers that do not respond to standard hormonal treatment.
Our team of specialists includes thoracic surgeons who are leaders in minimally invasive surgical procedures, radiation oncologists who use specialized techniques such as stereotactic body radiation therapy and medical oncologists who are using targeted therapies to treat lung cancer. Patients with lung cancer have enrolled in the MSK IMPACT study, and received genomic testing of their tumor tissue to identify actionable mutations that may respond to treatment.

Our urologic cancer specialists treat more prostate cancer cases each year than any other center in Connecticut. More than 100 participants from Hartford Healthcare, Memorial Sloan Kettering, Lehigh Valley and Miami Baptist Hospitals attended the MSK-HHC symposium for advanced prostate cancer.

The Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute utilizes the most advanced treatments and technologies to improve chances for positive outcomes. Patients with muscle invasive bladder cancer were enrolled in a MSK collaborative therapeutic trial designed for this high risk patient population. More studies are currently in the MSK Alliance pipeline for patients with muscle invasive and metastatic bladder cancer.

To ensure the best outcomes, the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute offers patients a care plan coordinated across a multidisciplinary team. Hartford HealthCare is a participant in the COMMIT study, designed for patients with metastatic colorectal cancer and has multiple clinical trial options for this patient population.
Many studies validate that high surgical volumes (total number of procedures performed per year) result in improved outcomes for both operative mortality (in-hospital or within 30 days) and morbidity.

Measures of surgical quality, such as hospital volumes, have the potential to help patients select the best provider and hospital, and encourage providers and hospitals to develop and implement quality improvement protocols.

Institute surgeons perform a large volume of cancer procedures annually, which contributes to the excellence of our patient outcomes. The HHCCI utilizes surgical data to analyze measures ranging from length of stay to complications in order to determine opportunities for quality improvement.

<table>
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From 2016 to 2017, infusion therapy volume increased by 14.7 percent. The Institute is focused on increasing access to infusion services at locations convenient to patients. The most recent examples of this growth are the opening of the Waterford oncology practice, the new infusion center in Plainfield, the renovation of our Avon location and a new facility under construction in Manchester—all of which feature state-of-the-art infusion centers.

During the same time period, radiation treatment starts increased by 4.1 percent. With new treatment standards, the number of fractions per patient will decline, therefore new treatment starts is a more accurate indicator of growth over treatment volumes.

In April 2017, a new LINAC was installed at Backus Hospital. This LINAC has additional technology to offer Sterotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT), Sterotactic Radiosurgery (SRS) for Head and Neck and Brain and advanced imaging capabilities.
As an accredited cancer program, the HHCCI submits registry data to the National Cancer Database (NCDB), which includes data from all accredited cancer programs. This data is used to report 20 quality measures covering nine primary sites in order to provide comparative information to assess adherence to established standards of care. This reporting tool is used to promote continuous practice improvement internally, and also allows physicians and hospitals to compare care at the HHCCI compared to other facilities. For the measures below, the HHCCI’s performance exceeded both the NCDB and Connecticut in 2015 and 2016 (most recent data available) with the exception of colon nodes, which still exceeded the expected performance rate.

**Colon nodes**

A minimum of 12 lymph nodes removed and examined pathologically for resected colon cancer is desirable to accurately determine the stage of disease. The expected performance rate is 85%.

**Breast radiation therapy**

Extensive evidence from randomized clinical trials has shown that radiation therapy following breast conservation therapy for eligible patients reduces the risk of local recurrence. The expected performance rate is 90%.
Breast hormone therapy

Tamoxifen or third generation aromatase inhibitor is recommended or administered within 365 days of diagnosis for women with AJCC T1c or stage IB-III hormone receptor positive breast cancer. Extensive evidence suggests that hormone therapy reduces the risk of recurrence, contralateral breast cancer and death. The expected performance rate is 90%.

Needle biopsy

Image or palpation-guided needle biopsy to the primary site is the recommended approach to establish a diagnosis of breast cancer. The expected performance rate is 80%.
Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute
2018 Outcomes Report

STAGE AT INITIAL DIAGNOSIS

Breast, colon, prostate, lung and kidney cancer

Earlier stage diagnosis leads to more treatable and potentially curable cancer. The Institute offers numerous screenings and early detection programs with the goal of diagnosing patients as early as possible.

Breast and colon cancer mortality reduction is achieved through the use of screening for these diseases with mammography and colonoscopy. Institute clinicians serve our communities by providing lifesaving screenings, education and outreach to overcome barriers to screenings for the medically underserved.

The Institute also completed a pilot study of lung cancer screening with low-dose CT Scans based on a large national trial and through screening 1,000 high-risk people, we demonstrated that we could successfully replicate the positive outcomes seen in the national study with a primary care-based model in our community.

We now offer lung cancer screenings to those at risk (30 or greater years of smoking, active smoker or quit 15 years ago, ages 55-77) at all five of our cancer centers.
The most recent data available (2004-2009), reflects that the Cancer Institute has strong five-year survival rates compared to cancer programs in Connecticut and the National Cancer Database (NCDB) for Breast, Colon, Lung, Prostate and Rectum.

Five-year survival rates indicate the percentage of people who survive a certain type of cancer five years after diagnosis or starting treatment. Overall survival rate includes all stages and individuals of all ages and health conditions who have been diagnosed with cancer.

Survival rates do not distinguish between hospitals that may treat a larger volume of higher acuity cases or advanced stage cancer.
Bill Brunson  |  Finding a home after move from North Carolina

When Bill Brunson received the diagnosis of metastatic esophageal cancer in 2013, he prepared for the worst. He and his wife moved from North Carolina to Southington to be close to family who could help support him during his battle with cancer.

After starting his treatment in North Carolina and continuing with another health system in Connecticut, Brunson said he was looking for a more convenient option — a place where he could find great care close to his home.

“I was looking in the Sunday paper and I saw an ad for The Hospital of Central Connecticut Cancer Center. The affiliation with Hartford HealthCare and being connected to the other facilities appealed to me,” said Brunson. “I called the number and [Oncology Nurse Navigator] Noa Mencher answered and she was terrific. That really sealed it for me.”

Brunson was soon connected to oncologist Wylie Hosmer, MD, and continued his treatment with a regimen of chemotherapy. The treatment has helped bring Brunson’s cancer under control and is allowing him to maintain a good quality of life. Brunson said he’s particularly happy that Dr. Hosmer has been able to reduce the number of chemotherapy medications he’s taking to limit side effects.

“The name of the game in medical oncology is to try to strike the right balance between treating the cancer effectively, trying to be aggressive in managing it, but at the same time maintaining quality of life and trying to minimize side effects for the patient,” said Dr. Hosmer. “It’s a delicate balance that’s constantly in flux. That’s where the real art of taking care of cancer patients comes in.”

For the 78-year-old Brunson, that balance means he gets to stay active and spend precious time with his seven grandchildren and four great grandchildren while he continues his treatment.

“I can’t run three to five miles a day like I used to. But I still exercise and I walk quite a bit. I feel terrific,” said Brunson.
SUCCESS STORIES

MIDSTATE MEDICAL CENTER

Tracy Seguljic | MSK partnership helps patient beat leukemia

For months, Tracy Seguljic hadn’t been feeling well. She had recently lost her husband to glioblastoma — an aggressive form of brain cancer — and believed she was just suffering from exhaustion, brought on by her grief and the months spent caring for her husband and two teenage sons.

After experiencing shortness of breath, Seguljic went to the emergency department at MidState Medical Center where a bone biopsy confirmed that she had acute myeloid leukemia (AML).

“I was told to prepare for a month in the hospital. But at no point did I ever think I was going to die,” Seguljic said.

From the emergency department, oncologist Susan Alsamarai, MD, quickly began to develop a strategy for Seguljic’s care which included an aggressive form of chemotherapy.

“We needed to get things started quickly. We worked with pathology to get the results so we would know what the right course of treatment should be. We needed to know what leukemia she had and what mutations she might have,” said Dr. Alsamarai.

Seguljic had a mutation known as SLIT3 which makes the cancer even more aggressive. Luckily for Seguljic her treatment worked, and within two months her cancer went into remission. The next step was for Seguljic to have a bone marrow transplant. Thanks to the Hartford Healthcare Cancer Institute’s membership in the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance, Seguljic transplant was seamlessly coordinated by MidState and the world renowned specialists at MSK.

“It was very smooth getting her [to MSK in New York City] and expediting the transplant. This was 2015 and we had just begun our relationship with MSK. It was a good prototype of how we carry out this relationship,” said Alsamarai.

Seguljic’s transplant, made possible through a marrow donation from her sister, was a success. Four years into the partnership with MSK, the Cancer Institute now employs a bone marrow coordinator who facilitates transplants like Seguljic’s and follow-up care.

Seguljic credits the quick thinking by the team at MidState and the expertise of MSK in helping her beat leukemia. But, it’s her faith that has guided her emotionally through some pretty dark days, she said.

“This is just a bump in the road. You lean on God and don’t sweat the little things,” she said.
When Gordon Cleland found out he had advanced prostate cancer in January 2017, he said he would do whatever it took to beat the disease. An avid runner and swimmer, the 68-year-old attorney said he was prepared physically to take on the rigors of surgery and treatment.

“Truth be told, when I heard my PSA score [of 16], I had some fears about what that would portend and they proved to be correct. I did my best to motivate myself to get treated as quickly as I could,” said Cleland.

His first order of business was to find a top urologic surgeon to remove the cancer. Cleland, who had also recently successfully battled melanoma, asked a provider from another health system for the name of the best urologist in the region. His answer: Hartford HealthCare Tallwood Urology and Kidney Institute’s Dr. Joseph Wagner.

“I’m a lawyer, so when you get competitors recommending people who are not associated with their firm or their hospital, that means something to me. The guy must be really good,” said Cleland.

Cleland, from Monroe, made the 50-minute drive to Dr. Wagner’s Farmington office to discuss his options for surgery. Typically, a patient with metastatic prostate cancer doesn’t undergo a prostatectomy — surgery to remove part or all the cancerous prostate gland. For decades, doctors believed the procedure wouldn’t be effective if the cancer had already spread to other parts of the body.

“That didn’t make sense to me. I expressed that to Dr. Wagner. He listened to me and started doing some research and speaking to his peers,” Cleland said.

Through the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute’s membership in the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance, Dr. Wagner found that Cleland would be a candidate for a recent MSK study.

“Under the study, when there are metastasis to just a few sites, patients undergo androgen deprivation therapy (injections to lower the male hormone testosterone) and radiation to the metastatic sites. The patient goes on to have a prostatectomy,” said Dr. Wagner, director of robotic urologic surgery at Hartford Hospital. “He was a perfect candidate. So we applied the protocol from MSK here locally and he did great.”

Prior to his surgery in late May 2017, Cleland received radiation treatments at Hartford Hospital under the direction of Dr. Andrew Salner, medical director of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital. Dr. Salner said when the cancer has spread to only a limited amount of sites, like in Cleland’s case, those areas can be treated effectively using three to five highly focused sessions of stereotactic body radiation therapy, generally with few side effects.

“A team of highly specialized physicists and dosimetrists utilize sophisticated software to plan the treatment, and advanced linear...”

Continued on next page
Jessie Vadnais | 20-year-old finds courage to battle Hodgkin’s

At 20 years old, cancer was the furthest thing from Jessie Vadnais’ mind. Finding out he had Hodgkin’s lymphoma was a complete shock.

“I can remember when they told me. It didn’t seem real. You never expect to hear that from your doctor,” said Vadnais. “You don’t want to believe it and it doesn’t settle in until you make your first visit [to the oncologist] and you start hearing about all of your options of chemo and all sorts of medicines.”

The prospects of treatment were frightening to him; and at first he was reluctant to undergo the treatment he needed to help him survive this very curable form of cancer. The thought of numerous needles, CT Scans and the rigors of treatment scared him as much as his cancer did. A meeting with Windham Hospital Oncology Nurse Navigator Lori Terranova helped lessen his fears. Terranova offered the support and education he needed to begin his treatment. He met with oncologist Jeffrey Kamradt, MD, to discuss his options.

“I think his disease had grown a bit prior to him seeking treatment,” said Kamradt. “We knew his fears. So, we addressed his illness the way he needed us to, taking into account his feelings and wishes. We personalized his care and were successful in treating him.”

After a round of chemotherapy at Windham Hospital, Jesse’s cancer went into remission. Today he is cancer free.

“I think Jesse is a great example of what all cancer patients go through. They are initially frightened and unsure. They don’t know what’s behind that next door. For Jesse that was a bit paralyzing in the beginning,” said Kamradt. “He was able to muster the courage and muster the strength to overcome that and he did it little by little. I think he approached treatment as hurdles to jump over. And, as he jumped over each hurdle, he got closer and closer until he actually crossed the finish line.”

accelerator technology not available at most locations facilitates the treatment delivery,” said Dr. Salner.

After surgery, Cleland had an additional eight weeks of radiation treatments and his cancer was declared undetectable in August of 2017. He continues to see Dr. Wagner and his oncologist in Fairfield County for routine monitoring.

“I do not now have any detectable cancer, but I’m ready for any further challenge. Even if this whole experience only adds one additional year to my life, it will all have been worth it,” said Cleland.
Rebecca Spaulding | When the caregiver becomes the patient

As a nurse a Backus Hospital, Rebecca Spaulding is an expert at providing care to others. When she became a patient after being diagnosed with breast cancer in late 2016, she was a novice.

“It was a very surreal experience. I know a lot [about patient care] but when it’s you on the other side you’re kind of relearning all of the information,” said Spaulding. “Now it’s not ‘how am I going to treat you?’ It’s ‘how am I going to be treated.’ It’s a totally different mindset.”

Spaulding says she couldn’t be happier with the care she received from the Backus Hospital Breast Care team and is grateful to be on the road to recovery. She underwent a double mastectomy and reconstruction in February of 2017 under the direction of surgeons Kathleen Kurowski, MD, medical director of the Backus Hospital Breast Health Program — and Vinod Pathy, MD. Spaulding continued to see Dr. Pathy and received permanent implants in November of 2017.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better team than Dr. Pathy and Dr. Kurowski for surgery. I’ve always loved them as caregivers for my patients. They really go above and beyond to ensure that their patients are well taken care of and treated as individuals,” said Spaulding.

A few months after the surgery, Spaulding got the good news that she wouldn’t need chemotherapy. She returned to work but soon was told she needed to undergo radiation.

“Dr. Kurowski says breast care is really a team sport.

“I brought her case back to our Multidisciplinary Tumor Board and after discussing national guidelines, current research and the specifics of Rebecca’s cancer, we felt she would benefit from post-mastectomy radiation,” said Dr. Kurowski.

Spaulding underwent 25 treatments of radiation led by Backus radiation oncologist Dr. Nicole Anderson. Now cancer free, Spaulding has her blood tested monthly and sees medical oncologist Dr. Vanessa Johnson every three months for routine monitoring.

“Dr. Kurowski says breast care is really a team sport.

“I think that everyone [in the Backus Hospital Breast Health Program] is just so passionate about what they do and sees each patient as an individual,” said Kurowski.
About Hartford HealthCare

Hartford HealthCare is Connecticut’s most comprehensive healthcare network. Our fully integrated health system includes a tertiary-care teaching hospital, an acute-care community teaching hospital, an acute-care hospital and trauma center, two community hospitals, the state’s most extensive behavioral health services network, a large primary care physician practice group, a regional home care system, an array of senior care services, and a large physical therapy rehabilitation network. The Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute provides coordinated care across five cancer centers and is the charter member of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance.

Today, Hartford HealthCare is creating a better future for healthcare in Connecticut and beyond. We are a community of caregivers engaged in developing a coordinated, consistent high standard of care. We use research and education as partners in care delivery. We create and engage in meaningful alliances to enhance access to services. We invest in technology and training to develop new pathways to improve the timeliness, efficiency and accuracy of our services.

Our vision
To be nationally respected for excellence in patient care and most trusted for personalized coordinated care.

Our mission
To improve the health and healing of the people and communities we serve.

Our values

**Caring:** We do the kind thing.
Every Hartford HealthCare staff member touches the lives of the patients and families in our care. We treat those we serve and each other with kindness and compassion and strive to better understand and respond to the needs of a diverse community.

**Safety:** We do the safe thing.
Patients and families have placed their lives and health in our hands. At Hartford HealthCare, our first priority — and the rule of medicine — is to protect them from harm. We believe that maintaining the highest safety standards is critical to delivering high-quality care and that a safe workplace protects us all.

**Excellence:** We do the best thing.
In Hartford HealthCare, only the best will do. We work as a team to bring excellence, advanced technology and best practices to bear in providing the highest-quality care for our patients and families. We devote ourselves to continuous improvement, excellence, professionalism and innovation in our work.

**Integrity:** We do the right thing.
Our actions tell the world what Hartford HealthCare is and what we stand for. We act ethically and responsibly in everything we do and hold ourselves accountable for our behavior. We bring respect, openness and honesty to our encounters with patients, families and coworkers and support the well-being of the communities we serve.

Visit us at [www.hartfordhealthcare.org](http://www.hartfordhealthcare.org)

[www.hartfordhealthcare.org/cancer](http://www.hartfordhealthcare.org/cancer)
Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute
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