Aging adults face a number of challenges unique to the older population — a loss of independence, chronic health conditions, the passing away of loved ones, and an altered financial situation as they enter retirement.

One area that is often overlooked, however, is the impact of these changes on mental health.

Nearly seven million American adults over the age of 65 experience depression each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Seniors who are homebound are especially vulnerable — more than 40 percent suffer from two to three co-existing medical and psychiatric conditions.

To bridge the gap between mental health care and in-home services, Hartford HealthCare introduced the Behavioral Health Home Care program. The Behavioral Health Home Care program offers a comprehensive range of behavioral health services for homebound adults, including assessments and individualized treatment planning; medication management and education; short-term psycho-therapy; and family education and support. The multidisciplinary team includes specially trained nurses and occupational therapists, social workers and home health aides.

“Often times, the seniors we meet have never seen a psychiatrist or received any formal psychiatric treatment,” said Laurel Reagan, APRN, Director of Behavioral Health at Hartford HealthCare at Home. “We work closely with their primary care providers to...
‘We’re seeing great outcomes in the people we treat’

continued from page 1

make sure they’re prescribed the right medications, and help both the patient and caregivers learn strategies for changing behaviors and coping with stress.”

Education is often the simplest solution, since seniors can face a number of diagnoses and medications that they may not fully understand.

“Many patients are overwhelmed by their prognosis,” said Reagan. “They end up in and out of the emergency room, but often don’t have the opportunity to learn everything they need to improve their quality of life. So we take the time to teach the patient and their family about their conditions and medications.”

Although Behavioral Health Home Care’s services focus on mental health, the emphasis is on a holistic approach to wellness.

“We’re seeing great outcomes in the people we treat. Not only do they have a decrease in psychiatric symptoms, but they also are more likely to comply with their medical regimes, they’re staying out of the emergency room and hospitals, and overall, the quality of their life has improved,” Reagan said.

For more information on Behavioral Health HomeCare, visit HHCatHome.org or call 1.800.HOMECARE.

Anything to share?

Are you interested in sharing your clinical experience or knowledge with co-workers throughout the HHC Behavioral Health Network? Consider submitting an article to the Clinical Corner. For more information, e-mail amanda.napi@hhchealth.org or matt.burgard@hhchealth.org.

Have you heard the news?

Introducing Hartford HealthCare’s news hub Hartford HealthCare’s new online health news site delivers lively, informative and useful health news in a whole new way. Look for print, video and audio stories produced by HHC’s News Service, as well as timely tips on nutrition, fitness, health and wellness, and medical innovations.

Don’t miss a single story! Read the latest health news or sign up for our e-newsletter at: healthnewshub.org

Join us for an exciting and fun-filled day with health information, speakers, screenings, demonstrations, and activities for everyone from children to seniors.

Sunday, February 26, 2017
10:30 am – 3:30 pm
The Aqua Turf Club
556 Mulberry Street
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www.healthyfamilyfunfest.org
The ongoing heroin and opioid epidemic is certainly garnering a lot of public attention these days, and justifiably so. But as someone who cares deeply about populations that too often go neglected, I worry that the focus on addiction is taking the spotlight from the work that needs to be done for those suffering from chronic mental illness and related issues such as homelessness, discrimination and isolation.

That’s why I am so proud of the work being done at Rushford as part of its designation as a Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA) in the central Connecticut region. As the designated LMHA, Rushford receives funding from the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to provide critical services for underinsured and uninsured populations of people suffering from mental illness and associated issues.

The work being done by the LMHA teams at Rushford often make the difference in a patient’s ability to survive, whether it’s helping to connect them to medical care or referring them to homeless shelters. But more than that, the work helps patients get on a track that will improve their long-term health and even develop an independent lifestyle. The responsibility of the LMHA is to support people as they move into recovery, however the individual defines that.

The emphasis under the LMHA designation is to help patients take active steps that will prevent their illness from putting them in a difficult situation. The designation is also meant to provide services when a crisis occurs. LMHA services at Rushford include:

- A mobile crisis program that allows us to react quickly and efficiently to help those who are in need
- Respite beds for those who are in need of shelter or clinical supervision
- Community support teams that work closely with all local stakeholders to make sure services are reaching those who need them most
- A Behavioral Health Home program that strives to connect patients with a primary care physician or practitioner who can address health issues in the early stages, such as weight gain or diabetes
- Homeless outreach and housing teams that work to help people get into long-term shelters

The idea is to assist people into recovery and support them on their journey.

Pat Rehmer, MSN, ACHE, is Hartford HealthCare senior vice president for behavioral health and president of the Behavioral Health Network. Her column appears monthly in BHNews.

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Here’s to you!

- A weekly roundup of kudos from staff and patients. Please email your submissions to matt.burgard@hhchealth.org. Editors reserve the right to edit submissions for length and grammar.

A brush with greatness

Brian Cornell painted my room in a day this week. It looks amazing and it was so nice of him to come down to Old Saybrook to do it for me. Thanks Brian!

— Jennifer Staehly, therapist, Child and Adolescent unit, Joshua Center, Natchaug
Denying visas to doctors will affect patient care

■ A letter to the editor published Feb. 1 by the New England Journal of Medicine

In an embarrassed tone, an 87-year-old patient with end-stage chronic renal disease who is now receiving palliative care asked one of us, “Will you be able to stay in the United States for a few more months? I don’t want to change my physician during the last few months of my life.” He was expressing concern about the impact of statements made by President Donald Trump about immigration and immigrants. Since the November election, both of us have received similar expressions of concern from other patients as well.

During the presidential campaign, President Trump and his nominee for Attorney General, Sen. Jefferson Sessions (R-Ala.), proposed stricter regulations regarding the issuing of work visas, including eliminating H-1B visas — the visa that allowed us and many other international medical graduates (IMGs) to come to the United States for training and practice. The possibility of these administrative changes has made us and many IMG physicians who require a visa feel insecure about our future here in the United States. Muslim IMGs are particularly concerned because of President Trump’s statements suggesting that Muslim immigrants may be temporarily banned from the United States. Will the renewal of our visas be denied? Will we be required to leave the country, even though we are residing here legally? This uncertainty undermines confidence in the health care system and potentially erodes the trust that physicians have established with their patients.

IMGs compose almost one quarter of the physicians working in the United States, and in the past many have been able to work because of work visas. Many IMGs like ourselves work in underserved communities, and if we are required to leave, qualified replacements will be in short supply. Moreover, we expect that many residency positions will go unfilled if there are no applicants because they require visas. Such a move would adversely affect patient care in the United States for years.

Previous nativist and xenophobic movements in the United States were expressed as anti-Semitism or anti-Catholicism. Such biases hurt scientific development and clinical practice for decades by marginalizing many talented physicians. It is imperative to learn from this history. We ask the medical community to stand in support of physicians who require visas, and we ask the government to continue to allow qualified IMGs to enter the United States. American people deserve the best physicians to take care of them, regardless of their country of origin or religious background.

— Muhammad H. Majeed, MD
Natchaug Hospital

Fahad Saeed, MD
Univ. of Rochester Medical Center
Rochester, NY

Going Red at HOCC

The Hospital of Central Connecticut Outpatient Psychiatry Department participated in the Go Red initiative for women’s heart health on Friday, Feb. 3. From top left are Mihai Caratas, MD; Danuta Bator, Pam Rappanotti, Kim Hughey, Danielle Siedsma, Stacci Haltman, Carrie Garrigus, Hector Figueroa-Cruz and Michelle Mirsky.

In need of Nightingale nominees

Nominations for the 2017 Nightingale Award for Nursing Excellence are now being accepted. Nominees may be an LPN, RN or APRN who goes beyond the call of duty, demonstrate clinical excellence, are committed to the community, and support the nursing profession.

Award recipients will be selected using objective criteria and honored at the annual Nightingale dinner at the Mashantucket Pequot Museum in May.

To nominate someone from Natchaug, please contact Paula Purvis at paula.purvis@hhchealth.org. To nominate someone from Rushford, please contact Justin Sleeper at justin.sleeper@hhchealth.org. All nominations are due by Monday, Feb. 20.
Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. For additional information, please contact the FRC at 860.545.7665 or 860.545.1888. All programs are free of charge and, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Massachusetts Cottage, First Floor Group Room at the IOL Campus, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Support Group For Those Coping With A New Or Chronic Medical Condition.** Feb. 10, 17, 24 (Every Friday), 1 - 2 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For young adults ages 17-26 struggling with a new diagnosis, chronic medical conditions, physical symptoms or limitations. The group will help with difficult losses and limitation due to a medical condition, and build a positive, future-oriented focus with realistic goals. To RSVP, please call Elizabeth Alve-Hedegaard, APRN, at 860.545.7050.

- **Depression Bipolar Support Alliance Group (DBSA).** Feb. 13, 20, 27 (Every Monday), noon – 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room and Jan. 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 (Every Wednesday), 7 – 8 p.m. in the Commons Building, 2nd Floor, Litchfield Room. Peer run support group for those who have been diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder.

- **Alcoholics Anonymous.** Feb. 14, 21, 28 (Every Tuesday), 12:30-1:30 p.m. Join us for coffee and a one-hour topic discussion. To learn more, contact the AA General Service Office at 212-870-3400 or P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163.

- **Autism Spectrum Support/Educational Group Meeting For Parents.** Feb. 15, March 15, April 19, May 17, June 21 (Third Wednesday of the month), 6 - 7 p.m. Providing a place for parents of children on the autism spectrum, or with another related disorder, to come together and get support and information. Monthly, peer-run support groups interspersed with special guests and speakers to offer additional guidance and perspective.

- **Hearing Voices Network (HVN).** Feb. 16, 23 (Every Thursday), 5 - 6:30 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room. Peer run support group based firmly on a belief of self-help, mutual respect and understanding where people can safely share their experiences of voices, visions, unusual sensory perceptions. The groups offer an opportunity for people to accept and find meaning in their experiences that help them regain power over their lives.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** Feb. 16, March 2, 16, April 6, 20, May 4, 18, June 1, 15 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For family and friends of individuals who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Share your success and struggles. Learn to care for yourself while caring for others.

- **Al-Anon Parent Group.** Feb. 16, 23 (Every Thursday), 7 - 8 p.m. One hour topic discussion.

- **Bipolar: An Introduction To The Disorder.** Feb. 21, April 25, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This program is for family members and friends of individuals who have bipolar or a related disorder. It will present a basic understanding of the disorder, its treatment, along with specific suggestions to help family members and friends better cope with the illness.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** Feb. 22, March 8, 22, April 12, 26, May 10, 24, June 14, 28 (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 5 – 6:15 p.m. in the Center Building, Young Adult Service Group Room. Support group for 16- to 23-year-olds who identify LGBTQ issues as being prominent in their lives. The goal is to discuss support strategies to manage life challenges.

About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to matt.burgard@hhchealth.org or amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org. Articles must be submitted as a Word document. Every effort will be made to run the article in its entirety, but due to space constraints and style requirements, editing may be necessary.

Deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, Feb. 21, at noon.
Natchaug Hospital is pleased to announce that Scott Cornell has accepted the position of manager of facilities.

As the manager of facilities, Cornell will oversee both the maintenance and reception staff. A few of his key responsibilities will include the maintenance and repair for buildings and satellite sites; assurance of compliance with local, state and federal health facility and safety regulations; and management of Natchaug’s fleet of vehicles and associated transportation services. Cornell will also serve as the hospital safety officer and work in collaboration with hospital leadership to manage the emergency operation plan.

A touch of spring in February

Natchaug employee comes to the rescue

Nancy Himmel, a primary therapist with Natchaug’s Care Plus center in Groton, was working with a group of clients last month when one of them suddenly became unusually quiet. The client, normally very talkative and outspoken, had bitten into a Tootsie Pop, and a piece of it had lodged in her throat.

Himmel, who was aware that the woman was suffering from swelling in her throat, instantly stood up and patted the woman on the back to see if that might help improve her breathing. But the woman looked urgently at Himmel and shook her head, meaning “no.” Himmel then reached her arms around the woman’s torso from the back, locked her hands together and thrust upward.

The thrust, known as the Heimlich Maneuver, successfully dislodged the piece of lollipop in the woman’s throat, restoring her breathing. The woman was then given some water to help her recover her voice.

“My colleagues have jokingly changed my name to Nancy Heimlich,” Himmel said afterward. “It was just one of those things that happened very quickly.”
HR celebrates milestone anniversaries

Starting in January, Natchaug Hospital’s human resources department began a new process recognizing milestone anniversaries. Recipients will receive an acknowledgement in the new employee memo and a pin signifying years of service.

Those who accomplished a milestone anniversary in 2016 and were not recognized should have received their pin by the end of January.

If you have questions, please contact Jenna Hannelius in Human Resources at ext. 65929.

Jonathan Simpson (left) is recognized by his supervisor Tom King (right) at the January Leadership Forum meeting for his 10 years of service at Natchaug Hospital.

New nurse joins Natchaug team

Marisa Singleton, APRN, recently joined Natchaug Hospital as an attending on the child and adolescent inpatient unit.

Prior to Natchaug, Singleton served as a psychiatric nurse practitioner Thundermist Health Care in West Warwick and Gateway Health in Pawtucket. There, she provided diagnostic evaluations, managed psychiatric medications and coordinated care with community therapists as needed.

Singleton received her bachelor’s degree in psychology at Providence College and her master’s degree in psychiatric science at Northeastern University. She also completed her associate’s degree in nursing at the Community College of Rhode Island.

New nurse joins Natchaug team

Marisa Singleton, APRN, recently joined Natchaug Hospital as an attending on the child and adolescent inpatient unit.

Prior to Natchaug, Singleton served as a psychiatric nurse practitioner Thundermist Health Care in West Warwick and Gateway Health in Pawtucket. There, she provided diagnostic evaluations, managed psychiatric medications and coordinated care with community therapists as needed.

Singleton received her bachelor’s degree in psychology at Providence College and her master’s degree in psychiatric science at Northeastern University. She also completed her associate’s degree in nursing at the Community College of Rhode Island.

Client & Family Advisory Council

BHN East Region - Backus, Natchaug, Windham

We want to hear from you!

What is the Client & Family Advisory Council (CFAC)?
The CFAC is a team of clients and family members who represent all of our services. The purpose is to provide a place where clients, their families and members of the community can give feedback on their experiences with our programs and processes and help identify ways to improve them.

Why should I volunteer?
The CFAC hopes to strengthen the relationship between clients, their families, our community and the care team so that the Behavioral Health Network can improve its services and create a caring and safe environment. In order for us to be successful, we need to hear from those who have experienced our services.

What are the goals of the CFAC?
- Educate the community about client- and family-centered care
- Ensure that best practices are being followed in Behavioral Health Network programs
- Build a positive relationship between the Behavioral Health Network and the communities it serves
- Improve the quality and safety of client care
- Strengthen the relationship between caregivers and the clients, families and communities they serve
- Use feedback to make decisions about programs and processes that affect clients, families and the community
- Provide input into Backus, Natchaug and Windham Hospital’s priorities and decision-making
- Respect each client’s personal preferences, values, family situations and lifestyles
- Better the client and family experience at Backus, Natchaug and Windham Hospitals

Who can be a member of the CFAC?
Clients or family members of any age who have experience with any of our services: inpatient, ambulatory, school, in-home, emergency department and residential.

What is the membership commitment?
Members are asked to commit to a year of service and attend six to 12 meetings a year.

When and where are meetings held?
Meetings are held monthly on the main campus of Natchaug Hospital in Mansfield Center, on the last Thursday of the month from 5-6:15 p.m. Refreshments will be provided.

Have questions? Interested in joining?
Contact the CFAC Liaison, Shawna Cain, at 860-696-6090 or shawna.cain@hhchealth.org.

Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network
Connect to healthier.

Natchaug, ECSU team up for presentation

A luncheon and presentation entitled “Zeroing In On Suicide” will be held Tuesday, March 14, from noon to 1:30 p.m. in the Betty R. Tipton Room at the Eastern Connecticut State University Student Center in Willimantic.

The featured speaker will be Marisa Giarnella-Porco, President of The Jordon Porco Foundation. The Jordan Porco Foundation (JPF) is committed to preventing suicide in the high school, college and college-entry student populations.

The minimum donation is $100 per guest. Sponsored tables of 10 are available. If interested, RSVP by March 2 to Sherry Smardon at 860.465.5910 or sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org.
What our clients are saying

We want to know what kind of feedback Rushford clients are providing our staff members about the care they are receiving. Have you received a letter, email or even just a comment from someone in our care? Let us know! Send an email with your feedback to diana.decarlo@hhchealth.org. Thanks!

Help Rushford help others!

We are currently interviewing for membership on the Rushford Client Advisory Council

The Rushford Advisory Council is a volunteer collaborative partnership between Rushford staff and our clients and their families to help make Rushford’s great client service even better.

We are seeking members from across Rushford’s programs, services and locations. The council meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 5 p.m. at Rushford’s Paddock Avenue location in Meriden.

If you have a client or client family member who might be interested in providing ongoing constructive feedback about their experiences with Rushford, please contact Caitlin.Swartz@hhchealth.org.

Rushford employees come through for children

Rushford employees donated more than 75 toys and other gift items to children during the Holiday Gift Drive organized by staff at the Kuhn Employment office during the holiday season.

In all, 22 employees made donations during the gift drive, which lasted from Nov. 4 to Dec. 16 and was supervised by H3W project leader Jazmin Suarez from the Kuhn office. The gifts, shown above with Kuhn team members, were donated to children under supervision of the state Department of Children and Families office in Meriden.

Financial assistance available for patients

Do you know a patient who is in need of financial assistance? Hartford HealthCare can provide help to patients in need. Learn more about the program at https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/inside-hhc/patient-support.