February is American Heart Month, celebrating the vital organ that pumps oxygen-rich blood throughout our bodies. It is a time when we are reminded that healthy food and regular exercise can help prevent the nation’s number one killer: cardiac disease.

Yet when faced with a diagnosis of heart disease — or immediately following a heart attack — it is quite common for patients to feel sad and even clinically depressed.

According to the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH), patients with heart disease are more likely to suffer from depression than otherwise healthy people. Researchers are not certain

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**BHN president announces exit**

Stephen W. Larcen will retire by year’s end

After more than four decades of behavioral health leadership, Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network President Stephen W. Larcen announced his retirement on Friday, Feb. 6. Larcen will continue to lead the BHN and aid in the transition to new leadership until the end of the calendar year.

“This decision was a difficult one, given that I enjoy coming to work every day, and the leadership team that I partner with at the Behavioral Health Network and Hartford HealthCare has been one of the best in my career,” Larcen said.

Larcen has served in behavioral health management for more than 40 years. He arrived at Natchaug in 1990, when the Hospital was contained to its Mansfield campus and faced financial difficulty. As president of the organization, he led Natchaug’s transformation into

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**Heart disease, mental health closely linked**

February is American Heart Month, celebrating the vital organ that pumps oxygen-rich blood throughout our bodies. It is a time when we are reminded that healthy food and regular exercise can help prevent the nation’s number one killer: cardiac disease.

Yet when faced with a diagnosis of heart disease — or immediately following a heart attack — it is quite common for patients to feel sad and even clinically depressed.

According to the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH), patients with heart disease are more likely to suffer from depression than otherwise healthy people. Researchers are not certain
why that is the case. Conversely, the NIMH continues, it is clear that “having depression increases your risk of death after a heart attack.”

“Major depressive disorder is the most common psychiatric disorder in patients with coronary artery disease,” said J. Craig Allen, MD, psychiatrist and medical director at Rushford.

Citing recent research, Dr. Allen notes that the prevalence of depression in those diagnosed with coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure and in the period after coronary artery bypass surgery can be as high as 30 percent — much higher than in the general population.

It is difficult to know which came first — the depression or the heart disease. What is known is that health care providers across the spectrum need to be on the lookout for depression in patients during the vulnerable time following a heart attack.

“It is very common for those who have a heart attack to also meet criteria for depression following their heart attack,” said Heather Swales, MD, a cardiologist for Hartford Hospital and the Hospital of Central Connecticut. “The problem is that when people have depression, they have higher risk for recurring heart attack and even death in the weeks and months following the first heart attack.”

While the reasons for such outcomes are complicated, Dr. Swales notes that patients who are depressed are less likely to adhere to the treatment and medication regimes that are part of their care plan, such as exercising, eating right and quitting smoking.

Following a heart attack, patients are referred to cardiac rehabilitation, a 12-week structured, evidenced-based exercise program, which includes depression screenings. If depression is diagnosed, appropriate referrals are made to behavioral health clinicians so that patients may receive depression treatment.

Additionally, there are biological changes in the period just after a heart attack that contribute to issues of both heart health and mental health.

“There are biological properties at the cellular level in patients that have depression,” Dr. Swales said, noting that some of these properties affect the cardiovascular system. “In people who are depressed, there is a lower immune function and increased inflammation. The blood platelets are stickier, which increases the chances of forming a clot [leading to stroke or heart attack].”

“The whole concept of mind and body being connected is absolutely true,” she said. “Mental health has a definite and direct effect on a patient’s medical condition and their abilities to control their risk factors and prevent disease by reducing risk.”

In working closely with her colleagues in behavioral health, Dr. Swales encourages all clinicians to help patients identify barriers that prevent them from becoming healthy.

“Behavioral health is so important, because you can help patients determine what their trigger points are and what the obstacles are to good health, and help them work toward participating more fully in these lifestyle changes,” she said.

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Client advisory volunteers needed for IOL, Rushford

Rushford and the Institute of Living are each seeking patient/client volunteers for their respective patient experience advisory councils.

At Rushford, the Client Advisory Council is a new initiative. It is an outgrowth of the Client Experience Team, and is led by Caitlin Swartz in customer service. The Rushford Client Advisory Council aims to have 16 clients and/or parents of clients who can work collaboratively with Rushford to help the agency achieve its goal of increasing client satisfaction scores.

Similarly, the Institute of Living (IOL) is seeking volunteers for its Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC), co-chaired by Nancy Hubbard and Ellen Blair, APRN.

For those interested in becoming a member of the IOL’s PFAC, an informational session will be held on March 11 from 5:30 – 7 p.m. at the Commons Building, Second Floor, Hartford Room, IOL, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. Light refreshments will be served. For more information on this session, or questions on the IOL PFAC, please contact patriciac.graham@hhchealth.org.

The Rushford Client Advisory Council met for the first time recently, and is still seeking new members, particularly those who have been served at Rushford’s Middletown, Durham, Portland and/or Glastonbury locations. Referrals should be made to caitlin.swartz@hhchealth.org.
I met Jeff at work (at a restaurant), and being around him for so long I learned to like his little quirks.

— Stacey Hultman, Secretary, HOCC Outpatient Behavioral Health
(Stacey and Jeff are engaged!)

I met Doug through a friend and we hit it off right away. I knew as soon as I met him that I was going to marry him.

— Robyn Watrous, Detox Unit CA, Rushford
Robin and Doug have been married for 21 years.

I had just been in a car accident, my hand was in a cast, and I was starting a brand new job. Since my hand was broken, they had an employee help me out — who ended up being my husband!

— Laurel Koncki, Natchaug receptionist

We actually met working here at Natchaug Hospital, and we’ve been dating almost five years now.

— Jessica DeJesus, Natchaug mental health worker

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New, deadly form of heroin hitting Connecticut streets

After a sharp uptick in opioid overdoses in Connecticut, experts are urging parents to open up the conversation about heroin.

With a new form of heroin that is more potent and deadly being circulated, the worries about more overdoses are growing. Rushford’s Dr. Craig Allen told Channel 3 last Monday that heroin has been spreading. “People think of that as something that’s only used in the inner cities, under bridges, and in alleys, but it is not just there,” Allen said.

See the full piece at http://bit.ly/1F1DD36.

Smartphone apps for your mental health

Research and development of smartphone apps that address mental health are giving people new avenue for managing their emotional well-being.

The apps offer services such as access to therapists via messaging, mood tracking and monitoring tools, therapeutic games and exercises, and crisis text lines.

To read more, visit http://huff.to/1AOVsBg.

Larcen: ‘We have accomplished great things’

continued from page 1

eastern Connecticut’s leading provider of mental health and substance abuse treatment with eleven sites stretching from the shoreline to the Massachusetts border.

In more recent years, Larcen took on leadership roles throughout the Hartford HealthCare system, including Rushford. As the first president of the HHC BHN, Larcen has worked tirelessly to create a unified service line that provides a full continuum of behavioral health and addiction services. He has also led an initiative to integrate primary and behavioral health care through a partnership with Integrated Care Partners and the BHN, which also includes the Institute of Living and the psychiatric services departments in the East and Central regions.

“Steve has been an invaluable member of our leadership team and has exemplified our values in extraordinary ways, both within HHC and as a tireless public advocate for behavioral health clients and their families,” said HHC Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Jeffrey Flaks.

Larcen, Flaks and leaders throughout HHC and the BHN will coordinate efforts to provide a smooth leadership transition during the coming year.

“In my four decades of work in behavioral health, I have never seen the level of public interest and the increased open dialogue about the importance and value of our work,” Larcen said. “We have accomplished great things together, and I am confident more great things are on the horizon for behavioral health and the BHN.”
IOL Grand Rounds to feature NIDA Director Nora Volkow, MD

On March 5, IOL Grand Rounds will feature Nora Volkow, MD, Director of the National Institutes of Drug Abuse (NIDA), a division of the National Institutes of Health. She is the 2013 recipient of the IOL’s distinguished Burlingame Award, and her work has been instrumental in demonstrating that drug addiction is a disease of the human brain.

According to her NIDA biography, Dr. Volkow, “pioneered the use of brain imaging to investigate the toxic effects and addictive properties of abusable drugs.”

Her March IOL talk is entitled “Imaging Drug-Effects in Human Physiology.” It will be held in the Hartford Room of the Commons Building from noon – 1:15 p.m., followed by a luncheon in her honor.

The Talking Cure exhibit stops at Real Art Ways in Hartford

From now through May 25, Hartford Hospital’s Institute of Living and the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network welcome The Talking Cure — a traveling exhibit by New York artist Melissa Stern, to Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor St. in Hartford.

Taking its name from Sigmund Freud’s description of psychoanalysis, Stern’s show consists of 12 sculptures, each with its own narrative created by writers and brought to life as monologues by actors. Attendees may access the monologues through QR codes on their smartphones or on a provided MP3 player.

An artist’s reception for the show will be held on Saturday, March 7 from 4-6 p.m. For more information, please visit www.realartways.org/event/the-talking-cure/2015-02-12/.

Check out the Treasure Trove

BHNews offers employees a way to reach almost 2,000 of their co-workers for nothing. The Treasure Trove is a free classified section in each issue of BHNews.

Advertise items for sale or community events that are open to the public by Tuesdays at noon via e-mail to amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org or carol.vassar@hhchealth.org.
Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. 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. For additional information on these support groups, please contact the FRC at 860-545-7665 or 860-545-1888. The IOL FRC Support Group schedule through June is as follows:

- **Depression: An Introduction To The Disorder.** Feb. 17, April 21, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This program is for family and friends of individuals who suffer from depression. It will present a basic understanding of major depression, its treatment and ways family members might better cope with the illness.

- **Peer Parent Support Group For Those With Children On The Autism Spectrum.** Feb. 18, March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17 (Third Wednesday of each month), 6– 7 p.m. Facilitated by Goviana Morales, Family Resource Center Peer Volunteer and parent of a child on the autism spectrum. This group is open to any parent who has a child on the spectrum.

- **Sibling Support Group.** Feb. 19, March 5, March 19, April 2, April 16, May 7, May 21 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. This group will provide support for siblings of those struggling with mental illness, create a safe place to discuss and process feelings, and connect with others who have similar circumstances.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** Feb. 19, March 5, March 19, April 2, April 16, May 7, May 21 (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 you are caring for others.

- **Managing Schizophrenia.** Feb. 24, May 19, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will discuss the impact that symptoms of schizophrenia have on everyday activities, and provide tips on what you can do to make things better at home.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** Feb. 25, March 11, March 25, April 8, April 22, May 13, May 27, June 10, June 24, (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.

- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2 (First Tuesday of each month), 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly Conference Room, First Floor. Please join us as we bring together experts and those who want guidance, direction, and support through this journey. Let’s work together, help each other and exchange ideas. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling 860-545-7665.

- **Survivors Of Suicide Group.** March 4, April 1, May 6, June 3 (First Wednesday of the month), 7 – 8:15 p.m. at the Hartford HealthCare’s Avon Satellite Location, 100 Simsbury Road, Second Floor Suite. For those who have lost someone close to them by suicide. Please call the RSVP numbers with questions or concerns. 860-545-7716 or 860-545-7665.

- **Substance Use Educational And Support Group.** March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11 (Second Thursday of each month), 4 – 5 p.m. For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.

About BHNews

BHNews is published every Friday, except for the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s. Articles for submission are due by noon on the Tuesday of the publication week.

Story ideas or submissions may be sent to carol.vassar@hhchealth.org or amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org. Articles must be submitted as a Microsoft 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. Thank you.

Deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, Feb. 17, at noon.
Now that winter has unleashed itself, it’s important to watch your step around campus. While our maintenance staff does a great job clearing the snow and ice, here are some things to consider:

- **In the car**
  - Have your car winterized before the first snow fall.
  - Put an ice scraper in your car. Also check your wipers and wiper fluid. You may want to have an extra gallon of cold-weather formula wiper fluid on hand in your car or garage.
  - Keep a hat, gloves, scarf and blanket in your car in the event you become stuck or stranded.
  - Pay attention to travel warnings or advisories during winter weather. If you do go out, tell someone where you are going and take a cell phone with you.

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### Scarpa recognized by UConn School of Pharmacy

Jose Scarpa, Natchaug Director of Pharmacy, was recognized in the winter edition of the UConn School of Pharmacy Preceptor News newsletter. Scarpa was highlighted along with the other recipients of the annual Preceptor of the Year Awards. In addition to that award, he also received this year’s Pharmacy Alumni Association Exceptional Service Award.


### Funeral arrangements set for Lydia Rudolph

Condolences to the friends and family of long-time Natchaug mental health worker Lydia Rudolph who passed away on Thursday, Feb. 5.

A service will be held at noon on Sunday, Feb. 15 at Potter Funeral Home at 456 Jackson St. in Willimantic followed by a reception at The Lily Pad at 34 North St. in Willimantic. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Cancer Society or the Windham Regional Arts Council.

### New hires

- **Krista Hartling**, Infection Control Preventionist
- **Claire Letizio**, Substitute School Clinician, Hickory Street School
- **Sydney Seese**, Intern, Joshua Center Northeast
- **Sara Shermer**, Pharmacist

### Be prepared for winter weather conditions

Our children are the victims: What you need to know about addiction

Featuring:  
Gary Mendell – Founder and CEO of Shatterproof

You are cordially invited to attend a benefit luncheon to support Natchaug Hospital

hosted by  
Elsa M. Núñez, Ph.D.  
President of Eastern Connecticut State University  
and  
Stephen W. Larcen, Ph.D.  
President of Natchaug Hospital

Please join us!

**Thursday, March 19, 2015 | Noon–1:30pm**

Betty R. Tipton Room
Student Center | Eastern Connecticut State University  
Willimantic, Connecticut

- Minimum donation of $100 per guest (Sponsored tables of ten available)

Please RSVP by March 12  
860.465.5910 or sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org.

Luncheon sponsored by The ECSU Foundation, Inc.  
All proceeds will benefit Natchaug Hospital’s educational programs.
The Cuno Foundation of Meriden has awarded Rushford a grant of $2,000 to support the Mothers & Daughters Evenings Out program. Mother & Daughter Evenings Out provide mothers and their adolescent daughters the opportunity to connect with one another in structured, safe and fun environments.

Often, an adolescent girl’s self-esteem can be dramatically improved by knowing that those close to her value spending time with her and listening to what she has to say. The program helps facilitate moments for families to take time from busy lives to connect and build trust, self-esteem, and communication. Daughters also learn to see their mothers as positive role models in their lives. Rushford offers this program through Meriden schools several times per year.
Now through May 25 with an open-reception on March 7 from 4 – 6 p.m.: The Talking Cure Project: An Interactive Exhibit by artist Melissa Stern, Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor St., Hartford. With a background in anthropology, artist Melissa Stern has collaborated with twenty-four writers, poets, novelists, screenwriters, playwrights and actors to create art that inspires audiences to upload their own narratives on-site. Sponsored by Hartford Hospital’s Institute of Living and Hartford HealthCare’s Behavioral Health Network. For more information, visit www.realartways.org.

Sunday, Feb. 22 from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.: Healthy Family Fun Fest, The Aqua Turf Club, 556 Mulberry Street, Plantsville. Join us for an incredibly exciting and fun day filled with health information, speakers, screenings, demonstrations and activities for everyone from children to seniors. Sponsored by HHC partners The Hospital of Central Connecticut at Bradley Memorial, Central Connecticut Senior Health Services along with the Southington/Cheshire YMCA. Admission is free!

Tuesday, Feb. 24 from 7 – 8 p.m.: Students Give Parents the 4-1-1 on Weed, The Pavilion, Bridge Street, Old Saybrook. A forum for parents presented by Middlesex county students to educate adults and hold them more accountable. For more information, contact sheryl.sprague@hhchealth.org.

Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 5 p.m.: Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Rushford at Glastonbury, 110 National Drive, Glastonbury. Presenter Pamela Mulready from Rushford will teach attendees about how therapists diagnose a client with an addictive disorder and what types of treatments are available. Part of the Think 180 Wellness Initiative, sponsored by the Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce. Cost is $5 per class for Chamber members, $10 per class for non-Chamber members or local residents. To register online, visit www.glastonburychamber.com

Thursday, Feb. 26 from noon – 1:15 p.m.: IOL Grand Rounds: “Medical Marijuana: Legal Considerations for Providers.” Maya Prabhu, M.Sc., MD, LL.B. Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine.

Thursday, Feb. 26 from 5:30 – 7 p.m.: Eating Disorders: An Overview, Commons Building, 2nd Floor, Hartford Room, Institute of Living, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. The Institute of Living’s Family Resource Center and Eating Disorders Program is hosting an informative lecture on Eating Disorders in honor of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (Feb. 23-27), featuring Paula Holmes, APRN, IOL Eating Disorders Program Clinical Director. No RSVP required. For more information, contact patriciagraham@hhchealth.org, or call 860-545-7716.

Wednesday, March 4 at 5 p.m.: Anxiety, Rushford at Glastonbury, 110 National Drive, Glastonbury. We will explore how to manage anxiety, stress, and recognize your tendencies and practical preparation/managing circumstances. Presented by Dr. Laney Ducharme, Licensed Psychologist. Part of the Think 180 Wellness Initiative, sponsored by Rushford. Cost is $5 per class for Chamber members, $10 per class for non-Chamber Members or local residents. To register online, visit www.glastonburychamber.com

Thursday, March 5 from noon – 1:15 p.m.: IOL Grand Rounds: “Imaging Drug-Effects in Human Physiology.” Dr. Nora Volkow, Director, National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Thursday, March 12 from noon – 1:15 p.m.: IOL Grand Rounds: “Grief After Suicide: Finding Hope and Healing.” Jack Jordan, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist

Wednesday, March 11 from 5:30 – 7 p.m.: IOL Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC) Informational Session, Commons Building, 2nd Floor, Hartford Room, Institute of Living, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford, Connecticut. The IOL is seeking former patients and family members to apply and interview for a term on the PFRC. PFRC is an extension of the patient experiences, and provides council to IOL leadership to help improve IOL services. For more information on the PFRC, or to apply for membership, please contact patriciagraham@hhchealth.org, or call 860-545-7665.

Monday, March 16 at 5 p.m.: The Benefits of Acupuncture, Rushford at Glastonbury, 110 National Drive, Glastonbury. In this one-hour seminar, licensed acupuncturist Dr. Helen Pulnik of Rushford will discuss how this treatment can help with many disorders such as anxiety, depression, and stress. Part of the Think 180 Wellness Initiative, sponsored by the Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce. Cost is $5 per class for Chamber members, $10 per class for non-Chamber members or local residents. To register online, visit www.glastonburychamber.com.

Tuesday, March 24, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.: On Campus: Helping College Students with the Mental Health, IOL, Hartford Room, Commons Building, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. Designed for administrators and health care
The Treasure Trove is a free classified ad section for the benefit of Behavioral Health Network employees, retirees, medical staff and volunteers.

We welcome your submissions, which you can submit by emailing carol.vassar@hhchealth.org or amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org.

The deadline for submissions to be included in each Friday’s BHNews is Tuesday at noon. BHNews will include community events for not-for-profit organizations that are open to the public and free of charge. We do not accept ads for real estate, firearms or personal ads. Please do not list hospital phone numbers or hospital e-mail addresses for responses.

You must submit your item weekly if you want it to appear more than one week.

**FOR SALE**

**GE SPECTRA XL44 SELF CLEANING GAS CONVECTION RANGE** — Bisque in color, warming drawer, warming cook surface, glass top, four gas burners, excellent condition, converts to propane, pictures upon request. Call or text 860-303-9797.

**EVENTS**

**LENTEN FISH AND CHIPS** — Friday, Feb. 13 through Friday, April 3 from 4:30-7 p.m. at Saint Joseph Church, 120 Cliff St., Norwich. $9, full meal, $7, one piece meal and chowder is $4.

**VFW VALENTINE DINNER DANCE** — Saturday, Feb. 14, 7 p.m. at VFW Post 10004, Taylor Hill Road, Jewett City. Sponsored by the Ladies Auxiliary. Roast beef, mashed potato, gravy, vegetable, salad, bread, dessert, dancing to the P’om, $20 per person, advance tickets only. Call 860-303-9726.

**OPEN HEARTH COOKING CLASS** — Saturday, Feb. 14 from 5:30-10:30 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 21 from 1:30-6:30 p.m. at the John Bishop House Museum, Lisbon. Sponsored and led by the Lisbon Historical Society. Students will prepare dinner using period cooking utensils and methods then enjoy dinner by candlelight. Cost is $55 per person. The Museum is a non-profit organization and a portion of the proceeds will benefit museum restoration. For more information call 860-887-8052.

**FREE EYE SCREENING TO LOCAL CHILDREN** — Tuesday, Feb. 17 and Thursday, Feb. 19 at 10:30 am at Otis Library. Norwich Lions Club and the Otis Library team up to provide Kidsight USA screening program. Children must be accompanied by a parent. The test uses medically approved equipment and takes about two minutes per child. Call 860-237-4330 for additional information.

**GRISWOLD EXERCISE PROGRAM** — The exercise program will be held every Tuesday and Thursday, 6-7 p.m. at Griswold Elementary School Cafeteria. The class features low impact aerobics, weights, Pilates. Bring your own mats and weights.

**ANNUAL LENTEN FISH AND CHIPS DINNER** — Friday, Feb. 20 through Friday, March 27 from 3:30-7 p.m. at St. James Church, Preston. Fresh cod fish, baked or fried, coleslaw, French fries, D’Elias fresh bread, homemade desserts. Call ahead for take-out at 860-889-0150.