Suicide prevention is a topic that’s very close to Patricia Hayward-Paige’s heart. The Natchaug pharmacy technician lost a close friend to suicide nearly 20 years ago.

“She made an attempt and was unsuccessful. I was able to get her to a hospital and get her some help. She moved back to California, tried again and succeeded because no one there knew she was having a problem,” says Hayward-Paige.

Hayward-Paige’s experience has made her determined to help those who might be thinking about suicide. She and 19 other of her Natchaug colleagues, both clinical and non-clinical, are serving as Zero Suicide Champions, working as a group to find safer, more effective suicide prevention approaches.

It’s just one part of the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network’s implementation of the Zero Suicide initiative, a system-wide, evidenced-based approach.
approach to establish more focused assessment and timely follow-up care for patients who are at risk of suicide.

In 2015, the Institute of Living was one of the first 20 organizations worldwide to be accepted into and trained by The Zero Suicide Academy, a two-day training for senior leaders of health and behavioral health organizations seeking to reduce suicide among patients in their care. Natchaug, Rushford, Backus Hospital, and the Hospital of Central Connecticut began Zero Suicide implementation in 2016.

“This is a very comprehensive and methodical way of addressing prevention,” says IOL Medical Director Linda Durst, MD, who is leading the overall effort. “Before [Zero Suicide], there was an assumption that staff members were trained to assess for suicide risk and knew exactly how we should treat patients at risk. [In the past,] patients at risk were given an assessment but no one was really sure if we were using the results effectively in our efforts to prevent suicide.”

Under the Zero Suicide initiative, patients are assessed using the highly regarded Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS). C-SSRS uses a series of simple plain language questions asking the patient, for example, whether and when they have thought about suicide; what actions they have taken to prepare for suicide; and whether and when their attempted suicide was either interrupted by another person or stopped of their own volition. C-SSRS will be rolled out across Hartford HealthCare this year.

Zero Suicide also focuses on training clinical and non-clinical staff, evidenced-based treatments focusing explicitly on suicide risk, establishing policies to ensure safe handoffs between caregivers, and effective engagement of patients at risk including a follow-up phone call within 24 hours after discharge.

“It’s a high-risk period. Just reaching out and making that call dramatically reduces the risk of suicide,” says Deborah Weidner, MD, MBA, East Region Behavioral Health Network Medical Director and BHN Vice President of Patient Safety and Quality.

At Rushford, Medical Director J. Craig Allen, MD, says the hospital’s highest risk patients are those discharged from their detox program. He says these are the patients who get next day follow-up phone calls.

“The population that suffers from substance abuse disorders is at an extremely high risk of suicide because of the nature of the substances, which can increase the rates of depression, decrease inhibitions, and increase impulsivity. And the one variable that’s most highly correlated with suicide is alcohol,” Allen adds.

Dr. Weidner says staff engagement in the Zero Suicide initiative is a key to its success and that many staff members, like Hayward-Paige, have answered the call.

“For me, if I can help one person by volunteering to be part of this group then it’s worth it,” says Hayward-Paige.
Suicide Prevention Week outreach resources

**RUSHFORD**

As part of Suicide Prevention Week, staff from Rushford will be:

- Visiting local homeless outreach and housing staff at shelters and soup kitchens throughout the week with information, flyers and promotional items.
- Manning a resource table at Paddock Avenue. The table will have resources, information and free giveaways.
- Asking people to wear the colors (purple and teal) that week. The prevention team in Middletown is having students at the school they work in help by making purple/teal ribbons for people to wear.
- Hanging flyers in the Meriden/Wallingford area promoting suicide awareness and mobile crisis services.

**HOCC**

- Staff from The Hospital of Central Connecticut outpatient psychiatry office will have a table in the cafeteria from noon - 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 12, with resources and information for staff, patients and families regarding suicide prevention.

Everyone is encouraged to stop by and meet the team from 73 Cedar St., pick up resources and take time to learn about suicide and how to help. Staff will also be collecting donations and registering team members for the Sept. 23 Out of the Darkness Walk in East Hartford.

**BACKUS, WINDHAM**

- Staff from Natchaug Hospital will have booths at Backus and Windham hospitals in honor of World Suicide Prevention Day on Friday, Sept. 15, from 11 am to 5 p.m. At Backus, the table will be located in the center of the hospital by the courtyard and visitor’s elevators, and at Windham, the table will be in the main lobby by the Shea entrance.

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**World Suicide Prevention Week**

**September 11 – 16, 2017**

| Monday, Sept. 11 | No Events Scheduled |
| Tuesday, Sept. 12 | Youth Mental Health First Aid 8 am – 5 pm  Commons Building, Hartford Room |
| Wednesday, Sept. 13 | No Events Scheduled |
| Thursday, Sept. 14 | Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board Meeting 9 – 11 am  Armed Forces Reserve Center, Middletown  Zero Suicide: Update on the Zero Suicide Academy Initiative – Current State and Future Plans 12 – 1 pm  Commons Building, Hartford Room |
| Friday, Sept. 15 | World Suicide Prevention Day Conference 8:30 am – 12:30 pm  ERC, Heublein Hall  Flag Lowering Ceremony 10:30 – 11 am  In front of Hartford Hospital |
| Saturday, Sept. 16 | Mental Health First Aid 8 am – 5 pm  Commons Building, Hartford Room |

For the Friday Conference:
- **REGISTER ONLINE:** [https://hartfordhospital.org/health-wellness/classes/events](https://hartfordhospital.org/health-wellness/classes/events)
- **REGISTER BY PHONE:** 1.855.HHCHERE (1.855.442.4373)

For Tuesday and Saturday events:
- **REGISTER BY EMAIL:** PatriciaC.Graham@hhchealth.org

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**Mental Health First Aid training class available**

HHC Behavioral Health Network employees are invited to register for a Mental Health First Aid training program at the Institute of Living on Friday, Sept. 29, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Litchfield Room.

Please note that at least 10 participants are needed for the course to run. To register please email patriciac.graham@hhchealth.org. For more information, please call 860.545.7788.

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**Help for those who need financial assistance**

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](https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/inside-hhc/patient-support).
On Aug. 31, Governor Dannel P. Malloy marked International Overdose Awareness Day by holding a ceremonial bill signing in Hartford, where he signed legislation aimed at bolstering the state’s efforts to combat the opioid crisis.

The bill signing comes just days after a study released by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) predicting an 18 percent increase in accidental overdoses in the state for 2017 including a dramatic increase in overdoses involving fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid.

“Opioid addiction and prescription drug abuse is a disease that is impacting nearly every community and people of every background,” Governor Malloy said. “It is a complex crisis that does not have one root cause, nor does it have simple solution, but we need to do everything in our power to treat and prevent it. Our work on this front will not be finished until our communities and our families are no longer struggling with the grave costs of this illness.”

Among its several provisions, the new law: Increases data sharing between state agencies; increases security of controlled substances prescriptions by requiring certain scheduled drugs be electronically prescribed; reduces the maximum opioid drug prescription for minors from seven days to five days; and requires individual and group health insurers to cover medically necessary detox treatment, as defined by American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) criteria.

Cathy Walton, program director at Natchaug’s Care Plus and Joshua Center Southeast, represented the hospital at a National Overdose Awareness Day event in New London on Aug. 31. Natchaug and other organizations offered educational material and resources to attendees at the event.

Kiss your e-mail
Good-bye
(The Sequel)

Effective Nov. 15, 2017
all Hartford HealthCare e-mail will automatically be deleted after:
• Seven years for directors and above
• Three years for managers and below
• Deleted items folders will continue to be emptied once a week

For information and instructions for saving and storing your important business documents, visit the Information Technology page of HHC Connect.

This notice reflects stricter enforcement of Hartford HealthCare’s existing e-mail retention policy. Non-compliance and improper storage of business documents may create business and regulatory risks.
Thank you to IOL for your support

It’s been some time since I was a regular part of the Schizophrenia Rehabilitation Program. Now I’ve managed to cope with schizophrenia quite well. I still take meds, and still have symptoms. But because of your help and everyone else there, daily living is much more doable.

Recently I got another med change. The results have been excellent. Now I have a job, and I’m planning to switch over to and start attending the Chrysalis Center daily.

Depression has become my main source of mental illness now. Not severe, but debilitating. Schizophrenia is still present, but I “have it at bay.”

I exercise, eat healthy, and regularly attend 12-step meetings; I’ve been clean and sober for going on eight months now. Sobriety has become very important to me. I have a sponsor, and live in a sober house.

Without your help and the SRP, I imagine I would still be drinking/using, and plagued by voices and homicidal thoughts.

Thank you very much for your support. I appreciate it greatly.

— Former IOL Schizophrenia Rehabilitation Program client

Every moment matters.

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

Rushford recovery program well worth the effort

I am enrolled in Rushford’s outpatient addiction recovery program to support my efforts to stop drinking. I wholeheartedly recommend Rushford’s Relapse Prevention Program to anyone needing help to beat their addiction.

Substance abuse can happen to any of us — regardless of how well-educated and successful we are. When I realized I needed help, I looked for a discreet and confidential outpatient program, covered by my insurance, in a location close to home. I am happy to say I found that in Rushford at Avon.

The staff is amazing and their comprehensive treatment programs are very effective! The support groups provide a safe space with no judgement, teach me valuable coping skills and hold me accountable for my decisions. The other clients are people like me — good people who have a medical problem with which they need help. Everyone is so supportive and inspiring. I am now a much happier, healthier person due to Rushford.

I am so glad that I did not try to do this alone and plan to continue in the program to maintain my forward momentum.

— Current Rushford at Avon client

Natchaug client comfort

Thank you so much for today’s meeting. Meeting you, and seeing the fine work done at Natchaug was very heartwarming considering the difficulties with getting individuals treatment these days... places are all overbooked and overworked and the clients suffer.

Our mutual client mentioned she enjoyed the groups you had at Natchaug, something different in her long history of recovery and rehab. Sometimes it takes a village.

— Natchaug referral source

BHN leader to speak at opioid workplace forum

Pat Rehmer, Hartford HealthCare senior vice president for behavioral health and president of the Behavioral Health Network, will give the keynote address at an upcoming Hartford Business Journal seminar on understanding the impact of opioids on the workplace.

The event will be held from 8-10 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 27, at the Infinity Music Hall, 32 Front St., Hartford.

The widespread abuse of opioid drugs, including prescription painkillers heroin and other highly addictive drugs, are in the headlines on a daily basis. In Connecticut, there were 917 reported deaths from opioid overdoses in 2016, and there is no indication that trend is slowing down.

According to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 70 percent of the 14.8 million Americans who abuse drugs are employed. And 24 percent of workers admit drinking during the day at least once in the past year. When an employee abuses drugs or alcohol, there can be serious ramifications, including injuries, absenteeism, traffic accidents and lost productivity.

But when someone receives quality treatment, there are huge benefits to the employer. Absenteeism drops by 76 percent, lateness by 91 percent and productivity soars by 76 percent.

Behavioral Theory course planned for September

Beginning this September, the Anxiety Disorders Center/Center for CBT will offer the Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy Basic Proficiency Course on Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m. Sept. 26 through Jan. 23 (no class on Dec. 26 or Jan. 2) in the Institute of Living’s Hartford Room.

The course, which is instructed by David Tolin, PhD, and free to HHC staff, is an opportunity for interested staff to become familiar with the theory and application of cognitive-behavioral therapy. To register, contact Beth Pizzuto (ext. 5-7578). Pre-registration is required. Please note that this is a CME-approved educational activity.

Attendees will be required to purchase the course textbook by the first class “Doing CBT: A Comprehensive Guide to Working with Behaviors, Thoughts, and Emotions.” A reference copy of the textbook may be available at the IOL medical library.

About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org or steve.coates@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.

Deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, Sept. 19, at noon.

For more behavioral health news updates, subscribe to the BHN’s e-newsletter on www.healthnewshub.org.
Movies and television have long featured people suffering from common mental health conditions. Hoarding disorder is no different. It has been highlighted on programs including The Dr. Oz Show, The Oprah Winfrey Show and the A&E series Hoarders.

Although these representations may focus on extreme examples of people suffering from hoarding disorder, they often attempt to confront the misconception that hoarders are lazy or sloppy by showing that hoarding disorder is a legitimate mental illness that requires treatment. Fortunately, there is now evidence that people with hoarding disorder can be helped.

A new, two-volume book on the condition, authored by David Tolin, PhD, ABPP, director of the Anxiety Disorders Center at the Institute of Living; Blaise Worden, PhD, and Christina Gilliam, PhD, both staff psychologists at the Institute of Living’s Anxiety Disorders Center; along with former IOL post-doctoral fellow Bethany Wootton, offers an evidence-based treatment approach and practical steps to help people living with hoarding disorder.

CBT for Hoarding Disorder: A Group Therapy Program offers a comprehensive cognitive behavioral therapy approach for people struggling with hoarding disorder, which includes a guidebook for therapists and a workbook for patients.

The book will be released next month and is now available for preorder.

“Hoarding disorder is a relatively new diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) that is characterized by difficulty letting go of possessions or discarding possessions, resulting in clutter that impacts a person’s ability to function or be safe in their home,” said Dr. Tolin. “The best estimate we have is that about three percent of adults in the United States suffer from hoarding disorder.”

Until recently, a person with hoarding disorder was treated the same way as a person with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). That approach proved disappointing because hoarding and OCD are different. For example, people with hoarding disorder often do not have obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors that we typically associate with OCD.

“We’ve developed a new model of understanding hoarding that largely focuses on problems of emotion regulation and difficulty with effective decision making,” Tolin said. “As a result, we have conducted research using cognitive behavioral therapy, which is a form of counseling that involves teaching people how to apply new patterns of behavior and to challenge maladaptive ways of thinking. We have tested it in the group therapy setting and found that it is effective in a controlled trial.”

CBT for Hoarding Disorder is expected to make an impact on clinical practice right away because it is an approachable source of best practices.

“Clinicians in our field often use treatment manuals as a guide for implementation of effective treatments,” said Dr. Worden. “Since research efforts on hoarding disorder are relatively new in the field, there are very few protocols or manuals to guide mental health providers as they treat hoarding disorder. In our research and that of our colleagues, we have found our cognitive-behavioral hoarding treatment to be among the most effective of treatments available, and we are happy to share it with mental health providers and the scientific community as a whole.”

The Institute of Living’s Anxiety Disorders Center has long been a pioneer in understanding and treating this condition.

“We are one of the few sites in the nation that does both treatment and research on hoarding and related issues, and we have been doing so for almost two decades,” said Dr. Worden. “I’m proud to be a part of it.”
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.** Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29, Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27 (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).** Sept. 11, 18, 25, Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 (Every Monday), noon – 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room and Sept. 13, 20, 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25 (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.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** Sept. 13, 27, Oct. 11, 25, Nov. 8, 22, Dec. 13, 27. (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.

- **Trauma Support Group.** Sept. 13, 27, Oct. 11, 25, Nov. 8, 22, Dec. 13, 27. (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 6-7 p.m. A peer-led group that offers a supportive environment for individuals with any type of trauma history. Attendees will discuss relevant topics and educational materials will be available.

- **Introduction To Mental Health Benefits and Services.** Sept. 19, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will provide an overview of benefit programs available for individuals with mental health disabilities.

- **Autism Spectrum Support/Educational Group Meeting For Parents.** Sept. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, Dec. 20 (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.

- **It's Hard To Be A Mom.** Sept. 21, Oct. 5, 19, Nov. 2, 16, Dec. 7, 21 (First and third Thursday of each month), 10 - 11:30 a.m. Peer-led group that acknowledges the inherent challenges with modern-day mothering and offers an opportunity for mothers to come together, share experiences, and support each other. This group welcomes expecting mothers and mothers with babies to discuss any and all challenges associated with motherhood in a safe and open-minded space. Babies welcome! Space is limited. Please RSVP to 860.545.7324.

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**Code leader training ensures staff members are ready for anything**

Medical codes are high-risk, low frequency events at the Institute of Living. As such, staff are regularly trained and participate in mock codes to maintain competence. On Aug. 16, the IOL teamed up with the Center for Education, Simulation and Innovation to train the first cohort of nine nurses and physicians as Code Leaders.

Code leaders are evidence-based roles that form and direct functional, high-performing teams during medical emergencies to ensure best practices according to AHA standards, bring order out of chaos, give feedback and conduct debriefings. Staff trained as code leaders participated in a four-hour program and learned a curriculum created by educators Liza Nowicki and Becky Gleason. Pastor Jessica Van Denend was also on hand to highlight the importance of post event briefings and collaborating with pastoral care to support patients, families and staff.

Over the next few months, two or three more cohorts will be trained to provide coverage for all shifts and eventually improve the quality of care, patient outcomes and staff satisfaction.
Convocation Day kicks off new school year

On Wednesday, Aug. 23, more than 70 staff from the Natchaug and Rushford schools came together at the Joshua Center Windham CDT School at Temple B'nai Israel in Willimantic to prepare for the 2017-2018 school year.

With 10 BHN school sites represented, school administrators led activities and training tailored for employees who work with a diverse group of students through the BHN’s specialized school services. Breakout sessions tailored to academic teachers, special subject teachers, school clinicians as well as ancillary and support personnel engaged staff in learning activities that built on the expertise of the group.

This inaugural Convocation Day served to be an inspirational and successful kick-off to the school year ahead.

Help Natchaug through Amazon Smile donations

Help raise money for Natchaug Hospital through Amazon Smile. Just shop through https://smile.amazon.com and select Natchaug as your charitable organization.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

Tens of millions of products are eligible for donation. You’ll see them marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on the product detail page.

Back-to-school survival kits

Staff on the child and adolescent inpatient unit collaborated to create Back-to-School Survival kits for the kids as they prepared to return to school.

- **Play Dough** to mold your minds
- **“Smarties”** for all that you will learn
- Remember that you’re already one smart “Cookie”
- The color pencils are to color your day bright and cheerful
- The gum is because we stick together and help each other
- The pencil-shaped bookmark is for all the great books we will read this year
- **Lifesaver** is to remind you that you can always ask for help
- **Starburst** is to remind you that you’re always a star in class and everyone shines in their own way!

Thank you to the staff members who helped make it happen — Arlene Burns, Sheryl Savino, Nancy Santiago and Sarah Peck.
Teamwork prevails at Camp Pattagansett

Rushford Academy clients visited Camp Pattagansett in East Lyme to participate in a series of team-building activities, low rope course elements, climbing walls and last but not least, the zipline. Adventure education offers a number of benefits, including improved group skills, communication, trust, focus, problem-solving, while encouraging positive risk-taking, creating a supportive environment, building confidence and increasing self esteem.

Thank you to Jeanette Barrows, Outdoor Program Specialist with the Girl Scouts of America, and camp volunteers Donna and Patrick for being so welcoming.

We care about you! 

Health & Wellness Fair
for Rushford clients and staff

Featuring more than a dozen health and wellness agencies from across Connecticut

Thursday, Oct. 19 | 10 am–1 pm

Rushford Cafeteria
883 Paddock Ave, Meriden
Door Prizes and Raffle • Refreshments will be served.

Rushford
Connect to healthier™