As 2016 draws to a close, the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network celebrates another momentous year of improving access to treatment and raising awareness of mental health and addiction. Highlights from the past year include:

**Behavioral Health Network**
- The Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network (BHN) placed 12 mental health clinicians in primary care practices as part of the Primary Care-Behavioral Health Initiative. Also received $100,000 grant from the Connecticut Health Foundation to support the development of the data and analytic platform for the initiative.
- HHC BHN President Pat Rehmer joined Gov. Dannel Malloy, members of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and other medical leaders to speak to an audience on the national prescription drug and heroin epidemic at the Old State House in February. Above left: Meriden police officers listen to instructions on the administering of Narcan kits. Rushford received grant funding from the state in November to supply police with Narcan to help reduce the incidence of people dying from heroin- and opioid-related overdoses. Above right: Members of the Primary Care-Behavioral Health implementation team. The Behavioral Health Network placed 12 mental health clinicians in primary care practices as part of the Primary Care-Behavioral Health Initiative.
professionals, educators and law-enforcement officials in Hartford for a community discussion on the national prescription drug and heroin epidemic — part of the White House’s community forum series on drug abuse.

- The BHN participated in numerous public forums in the national, state and community fight against heroin and opioid addiction, and continued its popular National Dialogue on Mental Health series.

- Produced “Hope After Heroin” half-hour television show, which focused on positive stories of recovery and featured behavioral network patients and clinicians.

- Successfully launched Epic electronic medical record IOL, Natchaug and MidState, as well as the Accumed electronic medical record at the Outpatient Counseling Center at The Hospital of Central Connecticut (HOCC).

- The 32-bed inpatient unit at HOCC reduced the number of seclusions by 19.5% and violent restraints by 20%.

- The HOCC Outpatient Counseling Center received re-certification for its Victim of Crimes and Abuse Program, a program that continues to thrive and serve an acute population.

- In collaboration with the Women and Infant’s Service Line, HOCC Outpatient Counseling Center Clinicians and management team developed and implemented the Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Project.

- HOCC celebrated its one year anniversary with its expanded adult inpatient unit the end of June 2016.

- The Backus Psychiatric Services D-1 Inpatient Unit increased its average capacity from 72 percent to 96 percent in FY2016.

- Due to increased capacity and a change in culture, the Backus D-1 Inpatient Unit achieved seven of 12 months with no zero restraint or seclusion events, including 119 days in a row as through the first month of FY2017.

- Jennifer Smith, MS, BSN, RN, Backus Nurse Manager, presented a poster titled “Use of H3W Workgroups on an Adult Inpatient Psychiatric Unit to Affect Change” at the American Psychiatric Nurses Association National Convention.

**Institute of Living**

- Child and Adolescent Day Treatment Program introduced a new program, “Connecting Adolescents with Psychosis” (CAP), to provide early intervention services for 13- to 18-year-olds with psychotic spectrum disorders.

- Established the Peripartum Mood Disorder Program with a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Program implemented thanks to collaboration among IOL, Women’s Health at Hartford Hospital and OB/GYNs in the community.

- Researchers at the Olin Neuropsychiatry Research Center at the Institute of Living were awarded a several-million-dollar grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to study the effects of smoking marijuana on the brain and the driving risk. In the 15 years since the Olin Neuropsychiatry Research Center opened, IOL researchers have generated almost $79 million in research funding.

- IOL established the IDEA team – staff members serving as consultants and responding to all escalating behavioral incidents. Through the IDEA team and other measure, the IOL reduced its restraint rate by a remarkable 70 percent.

- Took a lead role in adopting and implementing the Zero Suicide initiative, which sets an organizational goal in which no suicides take place over the course of the year. The initiative seeks to prevent suicides by closing gaps in patient care and increasing follow-up communication with patients.

- The Institute of Living has been authorized by the state to oversee the implementation of Zero Suicide goals and standards across Hartford Healthcare and organizations throughout Connecticut. Zero Suicide is a key concept of the 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, a priority of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention, a project of Education Development Centers Suicide Prevention Resource Center, supported by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

- IOL Psychiatrist-in-Chief Harold I. (Hank) Schwartz, MD, and IOL clinician Jeanne Kessler were recognized as Healthcare Heroes at the 2016 annual meeting of the Connecticut Hospital Association for their work on behalf of patients. Dr. Schwartz also served on the Insurance Commissioner’s Task Force on Mental Health Parity.

![IOL Psychiatrist-in-Chief Harold I. (Hank) Schwartz, MD, above left, and IOL clinician Jeanne Kessler, above right, were recognized as Healthcare Heroes at the 2016 annual meeting of the Connecticut Hospital Association for their work on behalf of patients. Dr. Schwartz also served on the Insurance Commissioner’s Task Force on Mental Health Parity.](image-url)
on Mental Health Parity.

• David Tolin, MD, served on the Connecticut Task force to Study Hoarding.

Natchaug

• One of 34 nonprofit organizations to be awarded a grant from Connecticut's Nonprofit Grant Program, created to help nonprofits improve delivery of their services to the community. Natchaug used the $75,000 grant to expand its Sachem House and Mansfield Young Adult programs to make the programs more accessible to clients.

• Opened an Older Adult Program at the new Windham Hospital Center for Healthy Aging to offer treatment for men and women 55 and older struggling with mental health or substance abuse.

• Expanded capacity for Medication-Assisted Treatment Close to Home (MATCH™) locations in Dayville, Groton and Mansfield so more people struggling with opioid addiction can be treated.

• Moved the Sachem House adult and young adult programs in Mansfield to a new building that offers additional program space, offices and parking.

• Rolled out Epic, the new Hartford HealthCare electronic medical record, on the child, adolescent and adult inpatient units, eliminating the need of for multiple medical charts and redundant paperwork and improving patient safety.

• Participated in and organized numerous community conversations about mental health and addiction, including a National Dialogue forum in Enfield featuring former NFL player in recovery Jeff Hatch.

Rushford

• Opened new MATCH (Medication Assisted Treatment Close to Home) programs in Cheshire and Avon for the treatment of substance use, including heroin and opiates, and co-occurring disorders. Began providing Medication Assisted Treatment for Medicaid clients in the Meriden-Wallingford region through the Community Behavioral Health Center.

• Accomplished a successful financial turnaround, achieving a profit margin of approximately $400,000 in FY2016 just three years after reporting a loss of more than $2.6 million.

• Rushford’s Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program was formally recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and expanded to include Natchaug Hospital, doubling in size by graduating two Fellows in 2016.

• Rushford physicians partnered with the American Academy of Pediatrics CQN Practice Improvement project to address adolescent substance use. In addition, Rushford physicians were seated on the Advisory Board for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Alcohol and Drug Policy Counsel, the Executive Committee for CT Society of Addiction Medicine, Health Assistance InterVention Education Network (HAVEN) and the Medical Advisory Committee for the National Council of Behavioral Health.

• Rushford’s state-designated Local Mental Health Authority for the Meriden area started a Young Adult Services (YAS) program and expanded our services to more than 400 residents in the Meriden-Wallingford area.

• Rushford and Natchaug Hospital partnered with Quinnipiac University’s Frank Netter School of Medicine to establish a third year medical student rotation in psychiatry.

• Drs. Allen, Silverman and McClain were named to the Hartford HealthCare task force charged with developing a curriculum for safe opioid prescribing and management.

• Celebrated 40th anniversary as a leading provider of substance abuse and addiction services in Connecticut.

• Hundreds of bus drivers from around the state participated in anti-bullying training led by Rushford Center. Training focused on recognizing bullying and handling it before the situation escalates.

• Took the lead in responding to the growing crisis in opioid and heroin overdoses in Connecticut, supporting state legislation, expanding public access to Naloxone (Narcan), initiating and expanding prevention, screening and brief intervention programs educating health care providers. Rushford leaders were very active and highly visible in the media and at medical and community forums across the state, offering expertise and insight on the causes and solutions to the problem.
Recovery grads continue journey by helping others

After years of living in the throes of addiction, Walter Asbury has come to realize that his past is not something to be ashamed of, but to be embraced. “My story is what sets me free,” Asbury told a warm and enthusiastic crowd of fellow graduates and well-wishers at the Recovery University graduation ceremony at the Institute of Living on Dec. 23. “I’ve been in recovery for 12 years and I wouldn’t give it up for the world.”

Asbury was one of 27 people who earned their Recovery University graduation diploma after completing an 80-hour course training them to become recovery support specialists, working directly to help those who are struggling with the same challenges they have faced.

The course is offered through Advocacy Unlimited Inc. of Connecticut and co-directed by Karen Kangas, PhD, director of peer recovery programs for the Behavioral Health Network. Many of the graduates have been able to get into recovery and stay on track thanks to treatment and care they received at BHN organizations. Kangas and fellow director Paul Acker hugged each of the graduates as they received their diplomas, with family members and friends filling the room with applause.

“Rushford was where it all started for me,” said graduate Edward F. Skiffington, who also is a leader on the Rushford Client Advisory Committee. “Now I feel like I am an agent of change. My whole purpose in life is educating others and giving hope.”

Harold I. (Hank) Schwartz, MD, psychiatrist-in-chief at the Institute of Living, said his organization was proud to host the latest Recovery University graduation ceremony, which is held at various locations.

“I congratulate the work you have done and the great achievement in making the most of your experience and bringing it to bear on behalf of others,” he said.

Kangas, who is herself a person in recovery, said the graduates were among the most impressive class she’s seen since the program began 10 years ago.

“You are all living proof that there is always hope, there is always recovery,” she said.

The Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network is comprised of the Hartford Hospital Institute of Living, Natchaug Hospital, Rushford and the behavioral health departments of the Hospital of Central Connecticut, MidState Medical Center, and The William W. Backus Hospital. For more information: contact Nancy Hubbard at 860.545.7665 or nancy.hubbard@hhchealth.org

BrainDance Awards for Student Projects on Mental Illness

The Institute of Living at Hartford Hospital is sponsoring an academic and art competition designed to decrease the stigma of mental illness. The BrainDance Awards encourage high school students to gain knowledge about psychiatric disease and develop a more tolerant and realistic perspective toward people with severe psychiatric problems. The competition also aims to promote students’ interest in careers in mental health.

New this year: A panel discussion featuring different mental health disciplines. To receive a BrainDance Award, a student must submit an academic project or an art project on themes related to severe mental illness. Projects must be submitted using a flash drive or dropbox format only (WLMP files or project files are not accepted). Acceptable video formats are .WMV or .MP4. Awards up to $1,000 will be given to the best submissions.

The projects will be judged by expert clinicians and researchers in the field, based on:

- Relevance to the issue of stigma
- Creativity
- Accuracy of information
- Scientific rigor

Projects on any theme related to severe mental illness will be considered for an award.

Karen Kangas, PhD, a director within the Behavioral Health Network who also leads the Recovery University program for Advocacy Unlimited Inc. in Connecticut, receives a grateful hug from graduate Tonya Cutler at the graduation ceremony for Recovery University at the Institute of Living on Dec. 23.
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.** Dec. 30, Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27, Feb. 3, 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).** Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27 (Every Monday), noon – 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room and Jan. 4, 11, 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.** Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Feb. 7, 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.

- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** Jan. 3, Feb. 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6 (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. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling 860.545.7665.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness. Jan. 5, 19, Feb. 2, 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.** Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 (Every Thursday), 7 – 8 p.m. One hour topic discussion.

- **Managing Schizophrenia.** Jan. 10, May 9, 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).** Jan. 11, 25, Feb. 8, 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.

- **Introduction To Mental Health Benefits and Services.** Jan. 24, May 23, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will provide an overview of benefit programs available for individuals with mental health disabilities.

- **Yoga.** Jan. 31, Feb. 28, March 28, April 25, May 30, June 27, 5 – 6 p.m. in the Commons Building, Hartford Room. Open to adult staff and family members. To RSVP or inquire, call the FRC at 860.545.7716 or email laura.durst@hhchealth.org
KidSight provides vision screenings

Joshua Center Northeast would like to thank Thomas Kohl, a member of the Lions Club for providing an amazing service to our students. The KidSight Program is a free vision screening for those between the ages of six months and 18 years old.

KidSight is an initiative that helps parents and child care providers to find and treat vision problems. Eighty percent of learning is visual so the goal for this screening is to assure students are “vision-ready” for learning, using screening technology such as the WelchAllyn Spot.

Kohl, a proactive member of the organization will be screening students at other Clinical Day Treatment Sites. He has also scheduled screenings into the 2017-2018 school year.

Christmas comes to Conantville

For the fourth year, staff from the Natchaug Hospital Conantville Building and H3W Friends workgroup adopted a family in need from one of the Natchaug school programs.

Staff donated presents, groceries and gift cards for the family of six totaling more than $800.

Scarf dyeing at Journey House

The Natchaug Hospital Master Gardeners collaborated with the Journey House girls to dye and decorate silk scarves. The scarves were colored using all-natural dyes, including yellow pigment from marigolds that were harvested from the Journey House Garden. The girls kept some scarves as head wraps and used others as holiday gifts for their families.
Rushford Academy students decorate for holidays

Students at Rushford Academy School decorated for the holiday season, researching cultural holidays from across the globe and incorporating the entire month of December into January. They presented their research on everything from Omisoka to Kwanzaa to Yule, all while standing in front of the Christmas tree and the Menorah in the classroom.

True to tradition, the class hung 26 snowflakes to remember those who lost their lives in the tragic shootings in Newtown four years ago. All the decorations will stay up through the first week of January, including the presentations. Students worked hard on their presentations, and all are welcome to come by and check out their research.

Enfield Leadership club fundraiser

The Enfield CDT leadership club raised more than $160 from their fundraiser at Asnuntuck Community College and Natchaug Hospital. These funds were used to provide clothing and toys for two families at the domestic abuse shelter in Enfield.

The students also used funds from a can and bottle drive they ran to buy make a Christmas goodie bag for each child at the shelter, which included holiday cards and coloring books. Thanks so everyone who supported the students efforts.

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, Jan. 10, at noon.
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 matt.burgard@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.

WANTED
ROLLING WALKERS — In good condition, no four-wheeled walkers please, to be given to patients who cannot afford a walker. Call Backus Care Management office at 860.889.8331, ext. 6319.

EVENTS
NEW YEAR’S SQUARE DANCE — Saturday, Dec. 31 from 7:30 to midnight at Lebanon Congregational Church. Non-alcohol event, potluck buffet, dancing to The Country Friends Band with Joe Lopresti as the Caller.
SINGING GROUP — Every Tuesday from 7-8:30 p.m. at Christ Episcopal Church, 78 Washington St., Norwich. No fee, voluntary donation only. Call 860.237.1887.
GRISWOLD REC PROGRAM — Every Tuesday and Thursday from 6-7 p.m. at the Griswold Elementary School cafeteria. Low impact aerobics, weights, Pilates. Bring mats and water. Call 860.376.4741.
KRIPALU YOGA — Thursdays, Feb. 16 through May 25 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at Norwich Recreation, 75 Mohegan Road, Norwich. Sponsored by Norwich Recreation. All levels welcome, bring mat and water bottle to learn yoga postures, flexibility on your way into calmness, strength and renewed energy. Instructor is Cheryl Hughes, 200 E-RYT and YACEP. $75 for residents, $85 for non-residents. Call to register at 860.823.3791.

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

Addiction does not care about age.
That’s why Hartford HealthCare’s Behavioral Health Network now offers Medication Assisted Treatment Close to Home (MATCH™) for people as young as 16 years old who are struggling with opioids or other addictions. MATCH™ utilizes Suboxone® or other medications, along with relapse prevention support, and offers convenient, flexible schedules for working professionals or students. Teens seeking help for addiction also have access to a multitude of other resources including residential treatment and the evidence-based Seven Challenges® Program for adolescent substance use.

Call 1.855.825.4026 hhcbehavioralhealth.org

MATCH™ adolescent locations include:
DURHAM Rushford 459 Wallingford Rd.
GLASTONBURY Rushford 110 National Dr.
MERIDEN Rushford 883 Paddock Ave.

Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network
Connect to healthier™