Almost exactly one year ago, Hartford HealthCare’s leaders kicked-off a multi-year initiative to improve the way Hartford HealthCare treats its customers. President and Chief Operating Officer Jeffrey A. Flaks likened the effort to a “moon shot.”

So perhaps it’s fitting that Sean Rodriguez, who joined Hartford HealthCare this month as our first chief experience officer, wanted to be an astronaut when he grew up. He also wanted to be a nuclear physicist and a rock star, so it’s not a stretch to say he aims high.

Rodriguez, 47, spent six years as chief experience officer (usually abbreviated as “CXO”) at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, the academic teaching hospital for Washington University in St. Louis. Before that, he was practice administrator of specialty and surgery clinics at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Sean serves on the executive board of the Beryl Institute, the organization that is seen as the international governing body for patient experience professionals. He is published and has presented widely on patient experience and comes highly regarded as a strong team-builder, effective change manager and a leader committed to staff engagement.

When Rodriguez arrived at Barnes-Jewish, an older inner-city teaching hospital, the hospital was on the prestigious US News Honor Roll for providing patients with top-notch medical care. But patients were giving the hospital a low rating for the way they were treated during their stay. Three years after Rodriguez arrived, Barnes-Jewish Hospital’s patient experience scores had climbed above the 70th percentile, a level that is almost unheard of for large, inner city hospitals where half of the patients are admitted from the emergency department.
HHC Profile: Sean Rodriguez

High School: University of the Philippines High School, Baguio City & La Salle Greenhills, Metro Manila

Degree(s): MBA, International Academy of Management & Economics; Graduate Certificate in Applied Business Economics, University of Asia and the Pacific; Graduate Certificate in Clinical Biomedical Informatics, Stanford University

Major and why: Economics, because I wanted to get a greater context/understanding of how businesses and the economy interact. Informatics, I have always had an interest in IT and did lots of work at Vanderbilt helping to design and operationalize a homegrown EMR system.

Home (is where the heart is) This is hard – I have lived in 11 different cities/towns before the Hartford area and each is special for different reasons: Manila, Philippines – lots of family there and where I was born; Malaga, Spain – I lived here for a portion of my childhood. I have many friends in the area and I visit once a year; Nashville, TN – I spent over ten years in Nashville. This is the most time I have spent in one place. I love the people and have many friends there.

10+ Questions

1. What did you want to be when you grew up? Pilot, astronaut, nuclear physicist, rock star!
2. How did you end up doing what your do now? By accident — I didn’t know healthcare or patient/customer experience was my calling until I was already doing it. Now, I am very passionate about it. I find that life has a way of calling you into what you were meant to do. I have had a wonderful life and I believe this is the best way for me to give back.
3. Have you experienced an event, realization, epiphany or inspiration that changed your life? Yes, many times. One early moment for me was sitting at the school yard during second grade at the end of the day. I was looking at the setting sun coming through the trees and thought to myself — “wow, I am alive,” and I decided to be fully present in that moment, fully aware of everything around me and made a point to remember that day, that experience. I somehow felt that doing that made me more aware/awake.
4. People or traits you admire? I admire people who are spiritually free. To be engaged and empathetic and have compassion, but also to be grounded and healthy. I admire people who are able to walk through life in this manner.
5. People or traits you wish you could change: Being judgmental/unforgiving.
6. Words to live by:
   • I am always happy, sometimes I just don’t know it.
   • Your task is not to seek for love, but to seek and find the barriers within yourself that keep you from it. (this is a favorite quote written by the poet Rumi)
   • Do your best to manifest the potentialities latent in your being. (Inayat Khan)
7. A successful day at work is when I... am able to help an individual or team change the way they work in such a manner that it positively improves either the patient/customer experience, employee engagement, or their own level of engagement in their work.
8. What’s playing in your car right now? XM’s The Coffee House or SiriusXM Chill. I also love the music of Jack Johnson and Alexi Murdoch.
9. What is your favorite lunch? Depends on my mood, I mainly eat Asian food. Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, etc.
10. What do you do for fun? Travel, spend time with family, spend time in nature.
12. What book are you currently reading? The Art of Being and Becoming by Hazrat Inayat Khan.
13. TV show you hate to miss: Game of Thrones. I read the books years ago when they were first written and I have been amazed at the quality of the TV production.
14. Any hidden talents? I love art of all kinds. I have done charcoal drawings, oil pastels, stained glass. I love music most of all. I write music on the piano/keyboard and also program using loops on a music workstation.
15. What is your secret weapon? Honesty.
How did he do it? Rodriguez said it took a combination of providing everyone in the organization with clear information about how customers viewed their experience in the hospital and providing very specific instructions for how to change behaviors that made patients, guests and family members unhappy.

“We made the voice of the customer clear to our team members and leaders by providing better tools and reports,” Rodriguez said. “We wanted to make sure they were really hearing what the patients were saying.”

To ensure accountability, the hospital adopted a detailed list of “mandatory expectations” each tied to the hospital’s ICARE values: integrity; compassion; accountability; respect; and excellence. Nothing was left to chance. Each employee was expected to sign a pledge to live by the expectations.

All of the expectations were backed by extensive training and tools to help managers support the mandatory ICARE behaviors. Clinicians and others, he said, were evaluated not only on their clinical or technical skill but on their ability to live the values.

Rodriguez said that providing patients with the best possible experience has many advantages, not to mention it’s the right thing to do.

“At the end of the day, it’s about healing not just the person, but healing the family and the community, he said. “It’s not just about being nice, it’s the sum total of everything: the technology, the clinical experience, the empathy. A lot of research has proven that the way patients feel about their experience is tied to their outcomes.”

Hear more about Sean’s philosophy on improving patient/customer experience in a podcast recorded in February when he appeared on HHC’s radio call-in show HealthCare Matters.

A few examples of “Mandatory Expectations” from Barnes-Jewish Hospital:

**INTEGRITY**
- I will strive to keep balance between my work and private life. I will plan in advance to meet deadlines and take breaks in an appropriate way.

**COMPASSION**
- I will smile, make eye contact, greet others and speak in ways that are easy to understand. I will actively listen and show concern and interest.
- I will ensure proper body language and tone of voice when communicating with others. I will avoid loud talk and making excessive noise.

**RESPECT**
- I will knock before going into a room or office, identify myself and ask permission to enter using the correct “key words” technique.

Through Dec. 31, 2017, Hartford HealthCare employees may buy one Apple Watch with a $75 discount from Aetna. The promotion is part of a partnership between Aetna and Apple designed to help employees stay active.

The watch must be purchased from a special shopping site and can be paid for by credit card or eligible employees may spread the cost over 12 months using interest-free payroll deductions.

To learn more or buy your watch visit HHC Connect.

Still having trouble deciding on which Apple Watch to choose?
- Visit the Apple Watch interactive gallery to mix and match cases, bands, and faces.
- Compare Apple Watch models

**Important:** Please use the watch galleries provided for comparison shopping only. Do NOT try to buy your watch directly from the Apple website. The discount offer is only available when purchasing the Apple Watch through Hartford HealthCare’s special shopping site. You can only find the shopping link on HHC Connect, HHC’s intranet.
Why Their Visit To New Britain Museum Proves Invigorating For People With Memory Loss

Pouty “Miss Cara Burch” does not look very happy in her 1888 portrait by American artist John Singer Sargent, but she captivated a group of older adults viewing the painting March 22 at the New Britain Museum of American Art.

The Museums & More outing, part of the Memories & More program launched last year by the Hartford HealthCare Senior Services Dementia Committee, brought 24 assisted-living residents with memory loss and staff representing Hartford HealthCare Senior Services communities for some cultural enrichment and mental stimulation.

Read more about the program on HHC Connect.

Central Region Teams Up with CCMC to Care for Tiniest Patients

This month, Hartford HealthCare (HHC) and Connecticut Children’s Medical Center (CCMC) officially launched their partnership to bring enhanced neonatal care to the Central Region.

This partnership brings opportunities for MidState Medical Center (MMC) and The Hospital of Central Connecticut (HOCC) to provide expanded services to the community and enhanced learning experiences for clinicians. CCMC providers are known as experts in the field and have access to additional resources that will contribute to the outstanding care already provided in the Central Region every day. Our partnership with CCMC will also allow us to optimize operational efficiencies, quality outcomes, and financial performance.

As part of the HHC agreement with CCMC, all neonatal medicine physicians and our neonatal mid-level providers at both HOCC and MMC have become employees of CCMC.

National Health Care Decisions Day

When the end of your life is near, how do you want to spend your final days, weeks or months? It’s a topic many of us prefer not to think or talk about. National Health Care Decisions Day, observed every April, reminds people to plan ahead and create Advanced Directives so loved ones have a roadmap to follow when the time comes.

For more information about the end-of-life discussion and what advanced directives include in Connecticut, visit the Hartford HealthCare NewsHub.

Is a Colonoscopy at 50 Really Necessary? Dr. Kristen Zarfos Knows First-hand That the Answer is YES!!

As part of his commitment to promoting the health of Hartford HealthCare employees, CEO Elliot Joseph has joined the American Cancer Society’s campaign to have 80 percent of eligible staff get a recommended screening by Dec. 31. In a recent interview on Fox 61, HHC breast surgeon Dr. Kristen Zarfos talked about her experience with colon cancer and a timely colonoscopy might have found her tumor before it became cancer. To watch Dr. Zarfo’s story and to learn more about Colorectal Health visit, HHC Connect.

HHC Cancer Institute Receives National Accreditation with Commendations

After a rigorous survey process by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute (HHCCI) received accreditation in March as an Integrated Network Cancer Program — something only a small percentage of cancer centers have been able to accomplish nationwide.

“This validates the extensive work the Institute has undertaken since 2016, establishing Institute-wide policies and procedures, Disease Management Teams, community education and support and countless other wrap-around services and achievements,” said Peter Yu, MD, Physician in Chief of the Institute. “Moving forward, there is nothing we can’t do for our patients as we share our experiences, expertise and best practices.”

According to the Commission on Cancer, an accreditation of this kind demonstrates a cancer program’s commitment to providing high-quality, multidisciplinary, patient-centered cancer care, and its ability to diagnose, treat, rehabilitate, and support no matter where they enter the system of care — Backus, Hartford Hospital, The Hospital of Central Connecticut, MidState Medical Center, or Windham Hospital.

Learn more about research at Hartford HealthCare

Want to learn more about research at Hartford HealthCare? The Research Department is happy to provide a one-hour introduction on a day and time to meet individual or team schedules.

Each session includes an overview of data management services, protocol development and statistical analysis assistance and grant-writing support. The HHC Institutional Research Board (IRB) processes also will be discussed.

To schedule this session please contact Liz Roper, director of research lizabeth.roper@hhchealth.org or 860.972.1964.
Around HHC: The best of HHC Connect

**Donate Life.** April is Donate Life Month. Learn more about the organ donation program at Hartford Hospital and how you can become a donor. [Read more.](#)

**Hospital Day.** Close to 200 Hartford HealthCare employees visited the state capitol April 5, among thousands from across the state to oppose Gov. Dannel P. Malloy’s budget proposal that would allow municipalities for the first time to assess property taxes on hospitals’ land and buildings. [Read more.](#)

**GE and HHC.** This month HHC and GE announced a collaboration that will allow clinicians to use data from the Epic electronic medical record and other systems to ensure that patients get the right care in the right place at the right time. [Read more.](#)

**Live from HOCC.** The Hospital of Central Connecticut (HOCC) joined MidState and other Hartford HealthCare (HHC) entities on the Epic and PeopleSoft 9.2 systems on April 1. [Read more.](#)

**Top Docs.** The April edition of Connecticut Magazine features the state’s top docs including many from Hartford HealthCare. [Read more.](#)

**Hitting it Out of the Park.** Two-time Major League Baseball All-Star pitcher and Southington native Rob Dibble broadcasts live from the Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute at Hartford Hospital once a month. [Listen.](#)
Jeff Mather

Title: Director of Data Management  
Department: Research Administration  
My job is to assist a very talented group to meet the data extraction and analytic needs of our department and HHC researchers  
High School: Windham High (The Whippets!), Windham, CT  
Degree(s): Trinity College, BS; University of Connecticut, MS  
Major: Biology  
Home (is where the heart is): Columbia, CT  

Which of the 10 H3W Leadership Behaviors would you like to get better at this year and why?  
Teach, Coach and Mentor – it’s getting a lot tougher to devote more than 50% of my time to this.

A great manager always... uses consensus decision-making whenever possible.

A great manager never... for the most part, hands down tasks without explaining why it will be of benefit.

What his staff says:
• I have never had a more supportive manager.
• He empowers us by expecting us to get the job done, yet if something goes wrong, there is no judgment.
• Jeff listens to us.
• He makes you want to come to work every day and do well for him and the organization.
• I am without a doubt better at my job now than I ever would have been had I not been working for Jeff.

10+ Questions

1. What did you want to be when you grew up? A pilot, professional football player or an oceanographer like Jacque Cousteau.
2. How did you end up doing what your do now? I’d taken courses in statistics and computer programming. I started doing bench top research and there were needs for database development and analysis and I migrated there and found I liked it.
3. People or traits you admire? Integrity, sincerity.
5. What is your best achievement? My three daughters.
7. TV show you hate to miss: Real Time with Bill Maher.
8. Worst defeat? I fouled every discus throw in a national meet in track and was disqualified.
9. Dream vacation: Cape Town, South Africa.
10. Top of your bucket list? Travel and more travel. I’d love to see Iceland and New Zealand.
Dr. Jonathan Gates was doing paperwork in his office at Brigham and Women’s Hospital Trauma Center when his phone rang on the afternoon of April 15, 2013. The trauma program manager on the line, a spectator at the Boston Marathon finish line, told him there had been an explosion.

“I didn’t really believe it at first,” said Dr. Gates, now the chief of surgery at Hartford Hospital. “But I decided to go to the emergency department and see what was going on. Once we got there, one or two patients had already arrived. When we realized what we were dealing with, we were all hands on deck.”

Dr. Gates’ team was ready. Between 2001 and 2013, it conducted more than 70 formal trainings in preparation for such an extraordinary incident.

“There’s a reason we work together with the same people every day,” Dr. Gates said. “Normal days are opportunities to train together for days that deviate from the norm. That’s what enabled us to have a good team in place and a system to handle the tragedy.”

Dr. Gates’ team treated more than 40 bombing victims, including many who required amputations and other extreme measures. This year’s marathon was April 17.

He recently brought his decades of experience to Hartford Hospital, where he plans to help bring a new level of sophistication to how healthcare providers approach trauma care.

“For a long time, the only thing we looked at was mortality; the next question is morbidity,” Dr. Gates said. “We want to know not just if they survive, but what their quality of life will be after the injury. A system like Hartford HealthCare, with Hartford Hospital at the center, has the foundation in place to focus on that level of care. I came here to help build great teams on top of that strong foundation.”

Dr. Gates credits preparation and teamwork with helping him manage the chaos that day.

“Everybody did what they do best,” Dr. Gates said. “When you saw that in action it was the best of teamwork, the best of surgery, and the best of humanity coming together. It was gratifying to be a part of something like that.”

Watch Dr. Gates talk about his experience with the Boston Marathon bombing in an interview on Fox 61.

**Value-Based Oncology: Understanding & Adapting to New Paradigms in Cancer Care**

Presented by the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute

Saturday, May 13, 2017
7:30 am to 12:30 pm
Connecticut Convention Center
100 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford

Cancer costs are among the fastest growing segment of the healthcare economy because change is happening in oncology faster than in any other medical chronic disease.

This symposium will provide discussions around value-based medicine and what it means for cancer care as well as patients, providers, hospital systems and the life sciences industry in the United States.

The event is open to oncology providers, practice administrators, payers, industry and health system executives.

Hartford Healthcare designates this live activity for a maximum of 4.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s). Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in this activity.

To pre-register visit, [http://www.hartfordhospital.org/communityeducation](http://www.hartfordhospital.org/communityeducation) or call 1.855.HHCHERE (1.855.442.4373)
Momentum: And we have TWO Winners

We have two winners in the Momentum kick-off contests.

Congratulations to Karen Fasano, director of nursing at The Hospital of Central Connecticut, who won an Apple Watch in our first Momentum recognition give-away.

Congratulations to Frank Mauro, I.T. field services manager at Backus, who won a $250 L.L. Bean gift card for providing recognition on Momentum during our second two weeks of the program.

Thank you to everybody for making Momentum such a success. Keep recognizing your colleagues and sharing your thoughts about working at HHC. When we all participate, we all win.

New from the System Support Office: Ask Tracy

Did you know over the past 3 years, the System Support Office (SSO) has grown to include 1900 staff members? The SSO provides critical central and support services including finance, planning & marketing, information technology, patient experience and revenue cycle to our colleagues and affiliates at 39 locations across the state.

A lot of staff in a lot of different locations can mean a lot of questions. Tracy Church, executive vice president and chief administrative officer wants to help answer your questions and hear suggestions about your campus, office or location.

Submit your questions about the System Support Office to Tracy Church, executive vice president and chief administrative officer at AskTracy@hhchealth.org. Answers can be found on HHC.Connect.
Customer Experience: How HHC Stacks Up

It’s not exactly a Yelp review or a 5-star rating scale, but Hartford HealthCare regularly collects information about patient experience. To get an idea of how we’re doing, our system and most others rely on a combination of scientifically-developed patient-centered surveys to provide the most comprehensive view of the overall patient experience. Our system’s Patient Experience team monitors the results to find opportunities for improvement. Here is a look at our scores and our goals, by the numbers...

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Year to date rating
Oct. 1 2016-Feb. 31, 2017

Target rating

Forgot your lunch money?

Credit cards are now accepted at most cafeterias and kiosks across the system. Employees, patients and visitors may use Visa, MasterCard and Discover with no minimum purchase required. American Express is not accepted.

Network News is a monthly publication produced by Hartford HealthCare. Please send story ideas to networknews@hhchealth.org. We will make every effort to consider your story idea, but due to space constraints, editing may be necessary.

Editor: Hilary Waldman
Associate Editor: Emily Gravell
Cover stories: Hilary Waldman
Around HHC: Emily Gravell
HHC By-the-Numbers: Emily Gravell
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Videography: Nick Dethlefsen, Jeff Evans
Graphic Design: Karen DeFelice Graphic Design
Connect with HHC on HealthNewsHub.org
Women & Men Creating Meaningful Partnerships

Sponsored by: Women’s Physician Leadership Consortium

May 16, 2017 5:30pm-8:00pm

Heublein Hall at Hartford Hospital

Key note speaker: Catherine Flavin of Thrive Leadership

**All Male and Female Providers are welcome**

Physicians, APRN’s, PA’s

Please RSVP to Joanne Jurs 860-972-2493 or Joanne.Jurs@hhchealth.org

By May 2, 2017

Networking, Collaborating, Partnership
Join Weight Watchers & get a **FREE Starter Kit!**

**Step 1** Don't worry, there's no charge. Hartford HealthCare pays for your membership so there is no cost to you. When it says purchase required, all that means is you have to enroll. Enroll in Weight Watchers by going to [https://wellness.weightwatchers.com/](https://wellness.weightwatchers.com/) and input the Hartford HealthCare Employer ID: **11256026**, Employer Passcode: **WW 11256026**. Follow the instructions to enroll.

**Step 2** Once enrolled, redeem for your **Starter Kit** by going to [weightwatchers.com/atworkstarterkit](http://weightwatchers.com/atworkstarterkit) and enter your member registration number and shipping address. Complete this step by 5/19/17.

*If you experience any problems enrolling or redeeming for your starter kit, please call Weight Watchers Customer Service at 866-204-2885.*

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*FREE OFFER: You must purchase a Meetings + OnlinePlus or OnlinePlus membership between 4/24/17 and 5/5/17 to get free kit. Available only where Weight Watchers membership is offered through the workplace. Kit must be redeemed by 5/16/17. While supplies last. US addresses only: no P.O. boxes or APO/FPO boxes. Offer may be revoked at any time and may not be redeemed for cash. Void where prohibited. ©2017 Weight Watchers International, Inc., owner of the WEIGHT WATCHERS registered trademark.*