Skin to Skin: A Win-Win C-Sections Allowing Mom and Baby to be One-on-One

On July 20, 2015, Alexandra Westen gave birth at Hartford Hospital to a healthy 6 lb. 2 oz. baby boy named Sven. Sven joins older brother Kai, born three years earlier at Hartford Hospital. Both babies were born by Cesarean section. But this time, Alexandra was able to hold Sven just moments after he was born.

“I had him on my chest,” explains Westen. “It made me feel more present in his birth, that I was part of the whole experience. It was a beautiful way for us to be one.”

Just over a year ago, Sara Garcia, RN and Peri-Operative coordinator on the Labor and Delivery Unit at Hartford Hospital led the initiative to improve the childbirth experience for mothers having C-sections through “skin-to-skin” contact.

“Research has shown that early skin-to-skin contact helps to promote breastfeeding,” said Garcia. “It also helps decrease a mother’s anxiety and discomfort, while helping to regulate a newborn’s temperature and keep them calm during the transition.”

The immediate contact through skin-to-skin further enhances Hartford Hospital’s focus on patient-centered care.

“We want our patients to have a wonderful birthing experience,” said Garcia. “Reuniting mother and baby right away allows for that initial bonding to occur, and most important, they can share a priceless, intimate moment that only happens once.”

Watch a story about Westen’s gentle C-section on Fox CT News.
Day Kimball and Hartford HealthCare Explore Affiliation

Recently, Hartford HealthCare and Day Kimball Healthcare (DKH) announced plans to explore a strategic partnership that could lead to a formal affiliation. Meet our newest potential partner:

Where is it? In the heart of Connecticut’s “Quiet Corner,” Day Kimball Hospital is located in Putnam and serves patients in towns including Danielson, Dayville and Plainfield.

Nearest cities:
- Providence, R.I., 20 miles east
- Worcester, Mass., 20 miles north

Licensed beds: 122

Staff of medical professionals: 300

Affiliates: Day Kimball Medical Group; Day Kimball Healthcare Centers in Danielson, Dayville, Plainfield and Putnam; Day Kimball HomeMakers; Day Kimball HomeCare; Hospice and Palliative Care of Northeastern Connecticut

Services: Primary care; behavioral health; cancer care; diagnostic imaging and blood lab; emergency medicine; physical medicine and rehabilitation; women's health; cardiology; dermatology; endocrinology; gastroenterology; infectious disease; nephrology; pulmonary medicine; rheumatology; sleep medicine; wound care

Surgical specialties: Breast; ear, nose and throat; endoscopy; gynecology; ophthalmology; orthopedics; urology

Founded: 1894

What's in a name? Named in memory of Day Kimball, who died in 1893. His mother, Susan Tillinghast Kimball of Boston, and other family members donated $9,000 to establish the hospital with the stipulation that it preserve the memory of her son.

Benefits for Hartford HealthCare? Would enhance HHC’s presence in Eastern Connecticut, where we already have affiliations with Windham Hospital in Willimantic and Backus in Norwich. At the same time, DKH has a unique background in rural health that would benefit HHC as we continue to focus on population health improvement.

Benefits for Day Kimball Healthcare? “An affiliation with HHC would provide DKH clinicians and patients with access to HHC’s key system-wide healthcare service lines,” said DKH President and CEO Robert Smanik.

Tallwood Urology and Kidney Institute Goes System-wide

The Tallwood Urology and Kidney Institute at Hartford Hospital now is a system-wide resource that will provide expertise from throughout the system for HHC patients with urologic and kidney diseases.

In 2013, an anonymous donor endowed a gift to launch the Institute to improve coordination of care, consistency of clinical outcomes, and patient satisfaction. Through the Institute, providers come together in six disease management teams to discuss and evaluate evidence-based medicine.

The teams focus on urologic oncology, kidney stones, pelvic health, men’s health, general urology and chronic kidney disease. The Institute also provides education and other resources to help patients better manage their disease.
Program Improves Care In and Out of the Hospital

A new program being introduced across HHC promises to improve patient outcomes and satisfaction by planning for discharge even before a patient’s hospital stay begins.

With new software called RightCare, clinicians can make arrangements for patients to continue their care once they leave the hospital based on standard assessments that begin in the admitting office at the start of a hospital stay.

The assessment is a series of seven questions that help caregivers determine if the patient is at high risk for readmission or complications from an illness. For a patient with a high-risk score, planning begins immediately to provide more intense treatment while the patient is in the hospital and for home or nursing care upon release. RightCare improves communication between acute and post-acute patient care services.

RightCare has been implemented at all Hartford HealthCare hospitals, and several post-acute care facilities are connected to the system.

With RightCare, says Wendy Heilwell, a medical case worker at Backus Hospital for the last 27 years, discharge planners no longer have to waste time on the phone searching for nursing home beds and can avoid keeping patients and families in the dark until an appropriate placement is found.

Instead, Heilwell simply transmits referrals electronically to a home-care agency or skilled-nursing facility that is part of the RightCare network. Based on patient information transmitted with the referral, the agency can respond quickly if it’s a good fit. “The software also will make its own recommendation for the patient based on the patient’s information. So the patient and the family know more quickly what care the patient will receive and where the patient will receive it.”

Patients also have a say in their post-hospital care. “Patients usually get their first choice of where they want to go. We type a note to the facility the patient prefers and get an answer quickly,” Heilwell said. “And if something comes up during the patient’s stay, we can update the agency or facility with a quick note. It eliminates repeat questions and phone calls.”

All of Hartford HealthCare’s skilled-nursing, home care and rehabilitation services are connected to RightCare, as well as about 10 other community providers. “We expect additional agencies and facilities to sign on,” Heilwell said.

Hartford HealthCare implemented RightCare to reduce readmissions and ensure patients get the right care. High-risk patients are three times more likely to be readmitted than the average patient and research shows that 64 percent of patients who were readmitted within 30 days didn’t receive post-acute care. RightCare identifies that need at admission and has been proven to reduce all-cause, 30-day readmissions by up to 35 percent.

“Patient outcomes improve,” said Heilwell, “and so does satisfaction.”

MidState Welcomes LIFE STAR to a New Home

Move Brings Aircraft Closer to Patients

On Aug. 7, a third home for LIFE STAR opened at MidState Medical Center. The new location better serves the community as it enables LIFE STAR to reach a wider patient geography and, as always, bring the patient to the most appropriate clinical setting, often Hartford Hospital’s level 1 trauma center. There are also LIFE STAR hangars on the roof of Hartford Hospital and at Backus Hospital in Norwich.
Patients and their medical teams can now Connect to Healthier like never before: Our Epic electronic health record went live on Aug. 4. Launched at 23 Hartford HealthCare Medical Group (HHCMG) primary care offices, Epic, as part of CareConnect, brings together medical records in one unified system: No matter where they go for care, patients can instantly share the same information with caregivers.

**In a few days, a world of connections**

Despite an unrelated network glitch on launch day, the new system integrated smoothly into HHC operations. “We saw 720 patients, signed and closed 82 percent of charts, and had bills ready to go out by 8:30 p.m.,” reported Dr. Spencer Erman, HHC's chief medical informatics officer for ambulatory care. “Within days, patient volumes were back over the 80 percent baseline.”

What’s more, CareConnect began delivering impressive results: HHC staff exchanged information on 1,743 patients — more than 15,000 documents — with 18 different healthcare organizations across the state and the country, even as far away as Northern California.

That's a major improvement for patients who once had to repeat themselves each time they sought care at a different location. CareConnect also features MyChart-Plus, letting them view portions of their medical records online, anytime and anywhere, including medications, lab results and summaries of their visits. They can use it to schedule appointments, refill prescriptions or get basic medical advice.

CareConnect delivers on the "Five 1s" we strive to achieve: one registration, one health record, one standard of excellence, one bill and one relationship.

**Leadership in action**

The launch demanded the best from all our Leadership Behaviors, and our entire team demonstrated it: CareConnect staff, HHCMG staff and physicians, and onsite support staff, backed by a responsive command center. HHCMG providers, staff and managers completed from 12 to 20 hours of intensive classroom learning, private coaching with trainers, and practice on a demo site. The week before go-live day, 50 percent of providers attended drop-in sessions to prepare. Working together, they helped achieve a successful workflow transition.

**First step in a system-wide rollout**

The CareConnect rollout will continue over the next two and a half years:

- April 2016: Hartford Hospital, Hartford HealthCare Medical Group specialty practices and Hartford Health-Care at Home
- August 2016: MidState Medical Center, Windham Hospital and Natchaug Hospital
- January 2017: The Hospital of Central Connecticut and Backus Hospital

With new speed and accuracy, CareConnect helps fulfill our promise of more accessible, collaborative and convenient care — a major step forward to help people Connect to Healthier.
The Gold Medal Manager Program spotlights managers who exemplify HHC’s values and our H3W Leadership Behaviors, resulting in the highest level of employee engagement and the achievement of exceptional results. Congratulations to our newest winners. Up to three Gold Medal Managers will be selected every two months. For more information and to nominate your manager, click here.

**GOLD MEDAL MANAGER**

Amy Schroder, MSN  
Nurse Manager, Labor & Delivery  
Hartford Hospital

Staff says:
- She maintains a regular presence on the floor and is continuously engaged in the daily workflow process on the unit. Her office door is always open and even when she has a heavy workload she will take the time to sit back and listen to any staff member who has a concern.
- Whenever the unit is short [staffed] and there is a need – without hesitation, she is changing into her blues and volunteering to be a helping hand on the unit.
- Patient safety is important to her. Amy routinely applies the Just Culture model when dealing with patient safety events caused by nursing errors and uses these scenarios as learning opportunities. This enables staff to feel safe reporting errors. In fact, in March of 2013, Amy’s Just Culture approach to a patient safety event was highlighted at Hartford Hospital Management Forum and then became a topic in the system-wide H3W message.

**GOLD MEDAL MANAGER**

Jennifer Gordon  
Manager, Patient Access Services  
SSO, MidState Medical Center

Staff says:
- During the blizzard of 2015, Jen and several staff members stayed overnight on cots in the Cornerstone Building. Jen wanted to make us comfortable, so she supplied blizzard goodies for all to enjoy. She also helped environmental services put together packets of towels, sheets and blankets for staff who stayed overnight. After the blizzard, Jen personally thanked each staff member for their dedication.
- Recently, a new work driver system caused dramatic changes in staff workflow. Jen supported this change by holding daily huddles with all involved, encouraging questions and feedback from staff, getting answers to the questions from the vendor and relaying information directly to staff. Although there was concern and pushback at times, Jen remained calm and supportive of her director’s goal to fully implement this workflow. Our department is currently exceeding expected productivity goals.
Hartford HealthCare Independence at Home Names Director

Amy Mosher has been named director of Hartford HealthCare Independence at Home's private pay division.

As director, Mosher is responsible for the development of a customer service-focused private duty agency which provides companions, homemakers and hands-on care to seniors in the Greater Hartford and Waterbury regions.

Before joining Hartford Health Care Independence at Home, Mosher was regional sales manager for the New England offices of Life Choice Hospice. She was also program director for the Advanced Wound Center of Johnson Memorial Medical Center and director of operations and sales for New England Home Care Inc., among numerous other leadership positions. Her career achievements include developing a private duty company that grew from 15 to 300 employees and expanding its client base from 60 to 700.

Mosher holds a Bachelor of Science degree in gerontology from Cornell University. She is involved with the Alzheimer’s Association of CT and the National Private Duty Association; is a co-founder of CARE – CT Association of Resources for Elders; and has been a member of the Gerontological Society of America since 1991.

A Glastonbury resident, Mosher is an avid polo enthusiast and enjoys extreme sports such as rock climbing, zip lining and bobsledding.

Hartford HealthCare Rehabilitation Network (HHCRCN) is celebrating 20 years of service. What started as four locations with 10 employees primarily servicing outpatient musculoskeletal diagnoses has grown into 28 outpatient locations and inpatient, home care and contract services across Hartford HealthCare and beyond. HHCRCN provides diversified rehabilitation services, including neurological, orthopedic, oncology, vestibular, hand therapy, athletic training, sports medicine and outpatient prevention and wellness. More than 500 rehabilitation staff members work across the network.

Help Wanted

Hartford HealthCare at Home and Hartford HealthCare Independence at Home are growing quickly and are looking to keep up with demand. There are a variety of openings in both divisions across the entire Hartford HealthCare service area. Open positions include: skilled-nursing, hospice, rehabilitation, social work and personal care aides. If you or someone you know may be interested in learning more, contact Ramona Murphy at Ramona.Murphy@hhchealth.org

HHC Cancer Institute’s Dr. Salner Wins Journalism Award

Congratulations to Andrew Salner, M.D., medical director of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital, who received the 2014 Special Recognition Award/Global Lung Cancer Coalition Journalism Award.

Dr. Salner was recognized along with Andrea McKee, M.D. chair of Radiation Oncology at Lahey Hospital & Medical Center, for work in bringing awareness to lung-cancer screening in the U.S. They were honored for their opinion piece published in the New York Times, “A Cancer Battle We Can Win.”

Salner is concluding a two-year study designed to answer the question: “Can we implement lung-cancer screening for high-risk subjects that will find lung cancer at an earlier, more treatable stage?” This study is the first of its kind conducted in all HHC regions. Read Salner’s winning article at http://nyti.ms/1LylkWS.
Around HHC: ERRACE 2015

On July 11, the vision behind “Connect to Healthier” came to life outside the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute in Avon as more than 1,000 people joined forces for the seventh annual ERRACE (Everyone Run/Ride Against Cancer Everyday).

The event started when Allyson Caputo, wife of Hartford Hospital orthopedic surgeon Dr. Andrew Caputo, was diagnosed with cancer. Together, the Caputos set out to fight Allyson’s cancer every step of the way. They launched the ERRACE organization to raise awareness, as well as money for cancer research. Allyson Caputo passed away in 2012 after a long and courageous battle with cancer, but her legacy lives on in the many lives she touched.

The annual event has become a rallying cry, a chance to inspire the community to be active and health conscious. Every year, ERRACE brings together expertise from every aspect of health care and challenges participants with a 25-, 50-, or 100-mile road bike ride, a 15-mile mountain bike ride and a 5 km run/walk.

Funds from ERRACE 2015 will be split between the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute and the LIVESTRONG Foundation. To learn more, visit www.errace.org.

Photo credit: Photos courtesy of Seshu Photography, http://seshuphotography.com
Connect to History

Possessing a sharp eye and a love of history, Lowell Joerg, 86, of Stockton, Calif. was browsing in an antique shop on the West Coast and stumbled across this 1910 postcard of Backus Hospital. After doing a little research, he decided to forward the card to Backus, along with a nice letter. In it, he talks about the importance of heritage and describes his act of sending the postcard as a “redistribution of happiness.” He added that he and his wife had a bet that if the hospital responded to him, he would buy her lunch. East Region President Dave Whitehead did reply, thanking him for his kindness. Whitehead was sure to include a gift certificate for Joerg and his wife to go out to lunch at a Panera Bread restaurant near their home. He also reimbursed Joerg for the $8 cost of the antique photo plus the postage to send it to Backus. A true long-distance connection.

The Medicare health insurance program for seniors celebrated its 50th anniversary at the end of July. Aetna was an administrator of the health insurance program for seniors when it was launched and issued the first-in-the-nation Medicare benefit payment to Hartford Hospital on July 9, 1966. The $331.71 payment covered the majority of inpatient hospital costs for 68-year-old Mary B. Augustus of Hartford, a surgery patient. Hartford’s place in Medicare history was mentioned in The Washington Post on July 31, 2015.

Hartford HealthCare By The Numbers *Year-end FY 2014 numbers

- **Total number of babies delivered at maternity units across Hartford HealthCare in 2013-14:** 7,149
- **Pairs of twins delivered across HHC in 2013-14:** 191
- **Total number of babies delivered by Caesarian Section at HHC maternity units in 2013-14:** 2,852
- **Sets of triplets delivered in 2013-14:** 4

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.
Ernie Voelkl: A life turned around by helping others

Ernie Voelkl still remembers the day he decided he did not want to live as an addict anymore. He was sitting outside the Rushford building in Meriden, bracing himself for what would be his first step to recovery — seeking treatment.

“I had been using drugs and alcohol since I was 14,” said Voelkl, now 47. “I was always getting into trouble, and I realized at that moment that if I died, really the only one on the planet who would care would be my mother.”

In the nine years since that day, Voelkl has turned his life around. He is holding down two jobs, one as a truck driver, the other at Rushford. He is happily married with three wonderful children. And he is highly respected and well-loved in the Rushford community for the mentoring work he does with adolescent boys who are struggling with the same issues that he struggled with for so many years.

“I know how to connect with these kids in ways that a lot of people can’t, because I’ve lived what they’re going through,” said Voelkl, who credits his happiness to the New Life Church in Meriden, which paved the way for his sobriety and opened his eyes to the possibilities that life has to offer. The best part about discovering a meaningful spiritual connection, he said, is the way it compels him to give back to others.

“I know that I have been blessed a thousand times over, so it makes me want to do something that will have the same impact for others,” he said. “That’s a message I share with the kids every time I see them: no matter what you’ve done, no matter how bad you think you are, you can be forgiven.”

Christopher Ferrante, who supervises Voelkl as program manager for Child and Adolescent Services at Rushford, said Voelkl regularly goes far beyond his job description as a residential treatment assistant. At Rushford at Stonegate, Voelkl oversees a staff of volunteers who lead 12-Step meetings, and he regularly leads the meeting on Saturdays.

“What Ernie does is truly remarkable,” Ferrante said. “It seems like every time I see Ernie, he is telling me a story of a former client who has just enrolled in college, found a good job or just received a coin for a sober milestone in the room. Ernie is the proof that recovery never stops, and neither do we.”

Voelkl's work with teenage boys ages 13 to 17 is something he commits to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He routinely takes them on trips to car shows and other events to show them the rewards of living sober. In the process, he helps guide and coordinate their progress in the 12-Step Program.

“They look at me like I’m a big success story sometimes and I tell them, hey, you guys are the real heroes. You’re here, staying sober! At their age, I was nowhere close to being as strong as they are,” he said.
HHC is on a journey toward hand-hygiene compliance. Our goal is 90 percent compliance at each hospital. Check out our scores for the month of July:

- Backus: 98%
- MidState: 92%
- HOCC: 98%
- Windham: 86%
- HHC: 94%
- HH: 95%

Every day, teams across Hartford HealthCare Connect to Healthier by working together to improve patient care. The annual Making a Difference Together Award recognizes this vital cross-system collaboration.

The next Making a Difference Award will be presented in December. Learn more and nominate your favorite cross-organizational team:


Deadline: September 25, 2015

The Hartford HealthCare Code of Conduct, along with our mission, vision and values, provides excellent guidance for promoting ethical, honest and lawful work practices.

For most of us, “the Code,” as we like to call it, is something we look at once a year during annual required training. However, we should make the Code a bigger part of our everyday.


Now, let’s test your compliance IQ:

**True or false:** You should discuss the Code with contractors and suppliers.

See page 12 for the answer.
Q: As we centralize and standardize so much across HHC, do we risk losing some of the awareness of our unique local identities?

A: We are working hard to create one customer experience no matter where patients enter our system — at a hospital, family health center or anywhere else. We know that reducing variation will lead to convenience, a better patient experience and higher quality. Right now, we’re experiencing the growing pains of building an integrated system. Everyone is feeling some loss of control — that’s normal. We’re purposefully swinging the pendulum toward more centralization; it will swing back. The work now is to create all of the systems and platforms to integrate.

Q: Why is there so much focus on cutting costs?

A: We all know healthcare needs to be more affordable. Everyone wants to pay less for healthcare — and increasingly they are paying less. So our challenge is to become more cost-efficient. It takes a constant focus.

Q: You’ve said that our lawmakers don’t understand or respect what we do and keep cutting our funding. What can we do about that?

A: We need to work harder at better informing our elected officials. As it stands, legislators are not helping the situation. We are facing a cumulative five-year Medicaid reduction of $88 million. Although the number of Medicaid patients is increasing, we only get paid 51 cents for every dollar we spend for patients who get care through Medicaid. Common sense shows that having more patients simply means we lose more money. Plus, there’s new legislation bringing costly regulations and property taxes to our system. We all need to help our elected officials see that Hartford HealthCare is an economic engine — we spur development, we provide and create good jobs, and we help make a better quality of life wherever we are.

Q: Can we expect additional layoffs?

A: We went through a painstaking process to try to be as humanistic as possible in our job reductions. And we’re making every effort to make sure we can avoid additional layoffs. But we have to candid: We don’t control the environment. Economic conditions could change. We know this much: As things stand, there are no job cuts on the horizon. We’re in a position of strength and performing well as a system — meeting and exceeding our targets. We hope our efforts to become more efficient, integrate and standardize to reduce duplication and grow our system will keep us on sound financial footing.

Q: What’s the overall view of where we are?

A: All of your hard work is getting results. Just look at our successes — hand hygiene compliance is among the best nationally, with a 27 percent reduction in hospital-acquired infections — that’s no coincidence. Catheter-associated urinary tract infections have decreased. Our serious safety events have been cut in half. We are making care more seamless, and strategic partnerships are occurring. All of this takes all of us working together. Thank you.
Welcome to the August installment of ITS TechTips! In this issue of TechTips, we’ll show you how to use filters in Outlook Web 2010 to quickly find emails from a specific.

1. **Log in** to your Outlook Web Mail.
   - On your Internet browser, go to [https://mail.hhchealth.org](https://mail.hhchealth.org).
   - Select the hospital you work for, enter your user name and password. Press log on.

2. Click on the **Filter** option dropdown.

3. Click on the **From** option.

4. **Enter** the name of the person to filter accordingly.

5. On the text box, type the last name of the person you are looking for or use the address book button to use it to facilitate your search.

6. Select the person you are searching for.

7. You will now see the person's name on the **From** option on the dropdown **Filter** menu. Click **Apply** on the bottom of the menu.

8. You will now see all the emails sent to you by the person you selected.

9. You can save this search for future use using the folder icon with a plus sign (+) and a star.

10. You can clear the filter by clicking on the filter icon that has a red X next to it.

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**OCAP answer:** True. The Code is a resource for the entire HHC community including our business partners.
This month’s Healthy U tip comes from the Central Scheduling team, whose offices are on the sixth floor of the Curtis Building in Newington. Here, they explain how the team “Connects to Healthier”:

So much of our day is spent sitting at our desks, working on computers. To reduce fatigue, increase blood circulation and “have fun at work” Central Scheduling staff members, led by Anna Domanski and Victoria Cruz, participate in gentle stretching exercises for five minutes during afternoon break. Team members agree that they feel more engaged and energized after participation.

Try this Mini Mental Break

**Desk Shoulder Opener**
Scoot your chair out of the way and stand a few feet from your desk so just your hands can touch the surface. Drop your head between your arms to achieve a good shoulder stretch. This will counteract the hunching that inevitably happens when sitting at a desk and typing, while also getting your shoulders back into proper alignment.

**Forward Fold**
Stand up and fold your body forward, with soft knees and let gravity take over. Pretend you are trying to touch your toes, but don’t worry about reaching them. Hold for at least 20 seconds and sway side to side if it feels good. By letting your arms and head hang, your neck and shoulders will decompress from all that computer typing. Plus, reversing the blood flow will give you a boost of energy for the rest of your work day.

—Carrie Lukens, PhD, a clinical psychologist at the Center for Metabolic Health at HOCC.