HHC Leads the Way in Responding to the Opioid Crisis

As the nation grapples with an opioid epidemic that has contributed to the deaths of more than 50,000 people this year — more than the number of people killed in car crashes or from gun violence — Hartford HealthCare is playing a leading role in offering hope and education to communities across Connecticut.

Leading representatives across HHC, particularly within the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network, are taking a comprehensive approach to helping people recover from addiction to heroin and opioid pain medications, which contributed to an 11 percent jump in drug-related overdoses this year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Connecticut officials project that more than 800 people will die of overdoses this year, a record.

Hartford HealthCare is making the issue a top priority internally, among providers and employees, as well as externally by way of expanded treatment and public education, said HHC Chief Medical Officer Rocco Orlando, MD.

“We take this issue very seriously and are committed to addressing it aggressively and comprehensively throughout the system,” Dr. Orlando said.

Among the numerous tactics, strategies and treatments that HHC has taken a leading role in using in the fight against the epidemic is enhanced access to Medication Assisted Treatment, an evidence-based approach that combines buprenorphine-based medications (like Suboxone®) with therapy to help set patients on a path of recovery.

At BHN entities, including Natchaug, Rushford and The Hospital of Central Connecticut Behavioral and Mental Health clinic, medication-assisted treatment has been offered as part of the BHN’s MATCH™ campaign for the last few years. MATCH, which stands for

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Brian M. Grosberg, MD

Title: Medical Director of the Hartford HealthCare Headache Center, part of the HHC Neuroscience Institute

My job is to: Be an academic specialist and provide high-quality, personalized care to my patients who suffer from headaches, train future headache specialist leaders and advance clinical research in the field of headache medicine.

Home (is where the heart is): With my family in Connecticut.

Which of the 10 H3W Leadership Behaviors would you like to get better at this year and why? For me, #5, “Respect and leverage separate realities,” is a challenge as we work to build a nationally renowned headache program.

10+ Questions

1. What did you want to be when you grew up? From an early age (maybe 7 or 8 years old) I knew that I wanted to be a physician.

2. How did you end up doing what you do now? Serendipity. In my first year of neurology residency, I cared for a patient with debilitating chronic migraine and helped relieve her pain. After that, I knew that I wanted to care for patients with headache for the rest of my medical career.

3. People or traits you admire? Dedication, compassion, intelligence, being good-natured.

4. A successful day at work is when... I know that I have made a difference in my patients’ lives.

5. What is your best achievement? I have two wonderful children who are smart, funny and good-natured.

6. What do you do for fun? I play basketball with my son and cards with my daughter.


9. What’s your motto? Less is more.

10. My life would be meaningless without... My family.

11. Tell us about your pets. One of our family friends gave us a beta fish that our daughter named Picky because we were told that it was finicky eater.
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Continued from page 1

Medication Assisted Treatment Close to Home, has been promoted through widespread advertising, education and community forums focused on both providers and the community. The BHN also has been promoting and providing education on opioid overdose and the importance of increasing access to Naloxone, or Narcan, the overdose reversal medication. Naloxone is increasingly available across the system, in emergency departments, on inpatient units and in primary care practices. BHN has also taken a leading role, ensuring that community providers have access to Narcan. Recently, Rushford provided Narcan kits and training to the Meriden Police department. Read the full story on HHC Connect.

Join Weight Watchers: No Gain, No (financial) Pain

HHC continues to offer free Weight Watchers membership for any employee and spouses covered by an HHC health plan. Attend meetings online, at work or in the community. For details, meeting schedules and to join, visit the Weight Watchers page of HHC Connect.
In Bloom  The Hartford HealthCare Family Health Center opened its doors in Bloomfield last month. Primary care physicians Stanley Glassman, MD, Arzu Demirci, MD and nurse practitioner Lynne Whitney are currently accepting new patients at the new location. The center is conveniently located close to Hartford Hospital Rehabilitation Network and Hartford HealthCare at Home offices. Read more.

Nursing homes in the News  U.S. News & World Report has named three Hartford HealthCare nursing facilities among the best in the country. Read more.

Health Care Heroes  Jennifer Ash, a Hartford Hospital nurse practitioner, was among nine Health Care Heroes in Greater Hartford recognized recently by the Hartford Business Journal. Read more.

CEOs to Know  Elliot Joseph was named to the list of “130 Nonprofit Hospital and Health System CEO’s to Know.” Read more.

Open Doors  Rushford held an open house this month for the location at 35 Tower Lane in Avon. The center will provide a full range of specialized outpatient treatment services for adults suffering from addiction-related issues, including Medication Assisted Treatment Close to Home (MATCH™). Read more.

Schwartz Speaks  Dr. Harold I. (Hank) Schwartz, the Institute of Living’s psychiatrist-in-chief, spoke at a press conference and on the “CBS Evening News” about new federal legislation that seeks to expand access to mental health care. Read more.

Send in Your Holiday Giving Photos  Is your Hartford HealthCare unit or department spreading cheer? Email holiday-giving photos to networknews@hhchealth.org. We will try to publish as many of your photos as possible in the January edition of Network News and on HHC Connect.
Compliance Week Winners

Compliance Week was observed across the system Nov. 7-11 with fun activities to help staff focus on the serious business of always “doing the right thing.” Prizes, including Dunkin’ Donuts gift cards were awarded for correctly answering online quiz questions. The following employees won grand prizes, an HHC-monogrammed backpack or duffel bag, for participating in some of the week’s compliance challenges:

- Anita Berube
- Rebekah DiLernia
- Deanna M. Kilduf
- Lena Landry
- Jennifer L. McNamara
- Melissa Tuthill

Taking the show on the road: (L-R) Rhonda Longo, Research Compliance and OCAP Education Manager; Tom Kononchik, Senior Auditor in Compliance; and Glenn Stadnick, Manager of East Region Compliance, provide compliance information in the East Region during Compliance Week, Nov. 7-11.

Your Voice Counts

Guest column by Kim Harrison, HHC vice president, public policy and government affairs

Another Tough Year Ahead for Connecticut Hospitals

The 2017 session of the Connecticut legislature begins in just a few weeks and newly elected legislators will be facing a biennial budget with a $3 billion deficit. Further complicating the state budget will no doubt be federal changes to the Medicaid program. With promises from Washington to at least partially repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), it would appear that the Medicaid program will change significantly, particularly in how states are reimbursed in caring for low-income patients. Keep in mind that the second-largest expense in the state budget is the Medicaid program and any loss of federal dollars will hurt low-income patients and the providers (such as Hartford HealthCare) that care for them.

The General Assembly will gavel in on Jan. 4, 2017, but the real business doesn’t begin until the governor presents his budget to the legislature on Feb. 8. At that point it’s up to legislators to accept, change or come up with a completely new state budget that will go into effect July 1.

Since 2013, Connecticut hospitals have faced significant cuts in the Medicaid program while paying higher taxes. Although I don’t have a crystal ball, given the state’s budget debt and the potential for big federal changes in Medicaid, this legislative session could be even more difficult than past sessions. HHC employees have been an invaluable part of our advocacy campaign through the voter voice tool. Last year we sent 7,000 emails to 147 legislators (there are 187), telling them that hospitals are the economic engines of Connecticut’s economy and Hartford HealthCare is the third-largest employer in Connecticut. Not only do we care for the sick, we provide jobs for our communities. As a result of your effort, the legislature restored much of the funding that the governor originally cut from hospital budgets.

I’m sure that I will reach out to all of you again this year to contact your legislators and I hope that we can even send more emails and involve every HHC employee in our advocacy campaign. After the budget comes out in February, I’ll be sending details on the impact to HHC and how you can use your voice to speak out on behalf of health care in Connecticut. Your voice has made the difference in the past and we’ll need you again to speak up!

Thank you for all you’ve done.

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Thank you for all you’ve done.
Hand Hygiene
UPDATE

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 November:

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Compliance Quiz

Heard it in the Cafeteria Line
While waiting in line at the hospital cafeteria, you overhear two people dressed in scrubs talking about a “case.” Although the patient’s name isn’t mentioned, you hear enough details to know it is your next-door neighbor. You didn’t even know that he was ill, much less that he had this serious condition. You notice others in the cafeteria line listening as well.

What should you do?
1. Approach the individuals in the scrubs and ask for more details.
2. Buy your neighbor a nice plant and take it over to his house after work along with a “get well” card.
3. Tell your prayer circle about your neighbor’s condition.
4. Suggest that the folks in scrubs take their conversation to a private location.

Compliance Quiz Answer: Found on page 7. The compliance quiz is brought to you by the Hartford HealthCare Office of Compliance, Audit and Privacy.

Our Moment
Elliot Joseph’s New Multimedia HHC Intranet Blog

His ideas, insights, life — and your stories

I want to start a conversation about Hartford HealthCare’s vision, and how we’re bringing it to life for people across Connecticut.

— Elliot Joseph
New Apple Watch Discount Will Make it Easy to Keep Your New Year's Resolutions

Starting in January, HHC is partnering with Aetna to offer employees a $75 discount toward the purchase of a new Apple Watch*. Apple Watch helps keep you active, healthy and productive throughout your day. With Apple Watch, notifications are delivered with a gentle tap on your wrist and timely information is always just a glance away. You can even receive a gentle reminder to stand up after you've been sitting too long. Apple Watch comes with the Activity app and Workout app built-in. The Activity app tracks daily activity while the Workout app supports dedicated workouts. There are also hundreds more available in the App Store.

Watch for more information, including ordering instructions, coming soon to the Wellness Incentives page of HHC Connect.

*Apple Watch requires iPhone 5 or later.

Compliance Quiz Answer: 4. Suggest that the folks in scrubs take their conversation to a private location. For more information, find the Reasonable Safeguards for Data Security and Confidentiality Policy, HHC-P20, here. The purpose of policy is to establish administrative, technical and physical safeguards to protect the privacy of protected health information (PHI) created, used or disclosed by Hartford HealthCare and its members.

HHC at Home Behavioral Health Program Enhances Care with New Services

After losing her husband a year ago, 86-year-old Helen has struggled with anxiety and depression. After a brief stay in the hospital, she received additional psychiatric care right in her own home.

Behavioral health nurses from Hartford HealthCare at Home worked with Helen to increase her knowledge about her illness, her medications and strategies to cope, improving her quality of life and overall health.

The Hartford HealthCare at Home Behavioral Health program provides patients with certified psychiatric registered nurses in a home-care setting. The nurses work with the patients to set up therapeutic plans and timelines for treating depression, anxiety, dementia and other behavioral health conditions.

Behavioral Health home care is available to those who are physically or psychiatrically homebound with a referral from a primary care provider. For more information, call 1.800HOMECARE /1.800.466.3227 or visit HHCatHome.org.

Research Round-up

Hartford HealthCare and the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) hosted a national Research Community Forum Oct. 25 and 26 at the Hartford Marriott Downtown Hotel in Hartford. The two-day event, “Foundations of Trust: Connecting our Community to Research,” featured nationally recognized speakers and showcased local talent, including Hartford Hospital’s Chris Peterson, DPT, Cert. MDT, who discussed success factors for patient engagement in telehealth. Pamela Johnson, from the Human Research Protections Program, moderated a panel of patients who discussed their decision to participate in research, barriers to research, consent concerns and what patients can do to become more empowered and involved. The conference was attended by investigators, IRB staff and federal partners from all over the United States, as well as several international guests.

Members of the Internal Organizing Committee at HH helped plan and co-sponsor the event along with members from Baystate Health, CCMC, The Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) and UConn Health.