



### AROUND THE BHN

BHN President Pat Rehmer tells it like it is to try to bring about change.

• PAGE 2



### HERE'S TO YOU!

Give a shout out to your co-workers in our employee recognition feature. • PAGE 3



### CONNECTION MADE

Radio interview on addiction motivates listener to seek help for wife. • PAGE 4

Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network

# BHN News

# Raising the roof

*Charitable contractor comes to the rescue of former BHN client now battling cancer*

**M**arilyn Becker has been undergoing a challenging course of chemotherapy treatments at Backus Hospital since being diagnosed with breast and lymph node cancer last year. But through it all, she always felt better knowing that no matter how hard things got, she still had a roof over her head.

But even that sense of security began unraveling last month when Becker received a notice from the City of Norwich informing her that the roof on her house was in bad disrepair. The citation said she had 60 days to have the roof repaired, or she would be subject to fines and other penalties.

Becker, who is 64 and lives on her



*Workers for G.A. Denison and Sons began work recently on repairing the roof of the home of Norwich resident Marilyn Becker who has been undergoing chemotherapy treatments at Backus and counseling from the Behavioral Health Network. George Denison, owner of the roofing company, heard about her situation and offered to repair the roof for free.*

own, did not know how she would be able to come up with the money to comply with the order. She confided her situation to Rosemarie Neilson, the Backus Hospital behavioral health social worker who has been helping Becker with her care.

Neilson in turn decided to contact local roofer George Denison, who had done work on Neilson's roof in the past and had a reputation for charitable work.

It was a few weeks before the Christmas holiday when Neilson spoke to the roofer, and Denison decided he would go to Becker's home to see what he could do.

..... Continued on page 2



# Let's call it what it is — discrimination

As people who work within the behavioral health field, we all know that our patients face unique and age-old barriers in making sure they get the help and care they need to recover.

I'm talking, of course, about the sense of shame and guilt that people with substance abuse or mental health disorders must often contend with — which makes it hard for them to even acknowledge their illness, much less seek out treatment.



That barrier has gone by many names over the years — social stigma, secret shame, the proverbial skeleton in the closet. I think it's long since time to call it what it really is — discrimination.

I know of no other disease that has the kind of negative public perception that too often comes with behavioral health issues. When someone has cancer or heart disease, do they feel they must hide their diagnosis out of fear that others will judge them harshly? Of course not.

But for too long that has been the case with people suffering from behavioral health issues — and that is nothing short of discrimination.

Our patients are faced with a unique burden, imposed on them by public misperceptions, that needs to be removed sooner rather than later.

As professionals who work closely with patients facing this unique sort of challenge, we need to lead this effort. When we hear people using terms such as “stigma” or “shame” to describe the burdens faced by our patients, we should be quick to point out that it's more than that. Our patients are being discriminated against.

Discrimination is a strong word, but I think in this case it is highly appropriate. We need a word that packs the power to change minds and hearts, and to kick down those age-old barriers.

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*Pat Rehmer, MSN, ACHE, is Hartford HealthCare senior vice president for behavioral health and president of the Behavioral Health Network. Her column appears monthly in BHNews.*



## 'If all of us do something like this, it can make the world a better place'

*continued from page 1*

“I got over there and I could see the roof was in bad shape,” Denison said. “I knew this lady was going through a hard time, so I thought I would help her out in the spirit of the holidays.”

Denison told Becker he would replace her roof free of charge.

“I couldn't believe there were people like him still in the world,” Becker said about her meeting with Denison.

“When he told me what he was going to do, I was in seventh heaven and beyond. I still am.”

Denison consulted with Becker to let her pick from an array of shingle colors and designs for her roof. She chose a shade of blue to match the color of her house, and Denison and his crew spent two days earlier this month removing the old roof and putting a new one up.

In the process, Denison said, his crew discovered that the house's chimney was falling apart, so he is planning to return to the house in the spring to put in a new chimney.

“I'm not sure how much longer that roof would have held up, to be honest with you,” Denison said. “I try to do something like this a couple of times a year. If all of us do something like this, just a little bit, it can make the world a better place.”

Becker said she continues to be stunned by Denison's generosity.



Becker



Denison

“I'm someone who actually has a BA in English literature, but I simply cannot find the words to express my gratitude,” she said. “It's so nice to not have to worry about that anymore, what a wonderful gift.”

Becker said some of her neighbors have noticed the work that Denison did on her roof, and asked for his contact information.

“Hopefully this will lead to more business for him,” she said. “That would be good karma.”

Neilson said she never expected Denison to make such a generous offer, but knew he was an honest and compassionate man.

“I figured he would take a look and let her know the situation with her roof, but that was above and beyond,” she said. “I'm so happy for Marilyn, she needs this right now.”

# Dr. Allen takes part in forum on heroin crisis

Like communities across the country, the small town of East Hampton has not been immune to the growing crisis in heroin and opioid abuse. Over the past month, two people have died and several more have been hospitalized due to overdoses — and that's just a glimpse of how serious the problem has become, state and community leaders said at a forum at East Hampton Middle School last month.

Among the panel of experts who spoke at the Feb. 19 forum was J. Craig Allen, MD, Rushford Medical Director, who said there needs to be more education and communication about the impact that substances like opioids and heroin have on the brain, especially in young people.

"The most fascinating and frustrating thing about substance abuse disorders is the way they can take over your brain," Dr. Allen told the audience of more than 80 people. He and other panelists urged parents to have frank conversations with their adolescent-aged children about the irreparable



*Rushford Medical Director J. Craig Allen, MD, speaks at the Feb. 19 community forum on opioid and heroin abuse in East Hampton.*

changes that experimenting with such substances can have on their brain functions.

Dr. Allen cited statistics showing that adolescents who are able to get to the age of 21 without experimenting with mind-altering substances have more than a 95 percent chance of living the rest of their lives without an addiction problem. Those chances become much less for those who experiment in their teens or younger years, he said.

Another perspective on the issue was offered by Brittany Richards, a

young woman from East Hampton who is in recovery for heroin addiction after the disease caused her to lose custody of her young daughter and abandon her dream of becoming a nurse. A former rider on the University of Connecticut equestrian team, Richards said she found herself living on the street after she became addicted to opioid medication to treat chronic pain.

"I think it's important for people to realize that people who become addicted are good people just like them, they just have a disease that takes over their life," she said.

Richards' mother, Kim Richards, said she was frustrated with physicians who overprescribed pain medication for her daughter and then resisted when she confronted them about the toll that addiction was taking on her daughter. Dr. Allen said he and other addiction medicine specialists are actively involved in educating the physician and medical community across the state on the dangers of overprescribing opioid medication.

Here's to you!

■ A weekly roundup of kudos from staff and patients. Please email your submissions to [matt.burgard@hhchealth.org](mailto:matt.burgard@hhchealth.org). Editors reserve the right to edit submission for length and grammar.

## Staff rallies from all corners to help

I would like to thank all the Natchaug staff that volunteered their discretionary effort cleaning up water and debris during the three floods caused by burst pipes in the heating and sprinkler systems from Feb. 14-16. Great teamwork was demonstrated by the staff from Journey House, Nursing, Creative Rehabilitation Services, Social Work, Housekeeping, Maintenance and Administration who addressed the situation and ensured clients were comfortable and safe during these episodes. Your support and dedication is very much appreciated, thank you.

— Scott Crawford,  
Natchaug Facilities Manager and Safety Officer

## Sen. Murphy visits Rushford

U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT), right, visited Rushford's Silver Street facility in Middletown on Feb. 28 to meet with Rushford leadership and staff about needs and concerns in light of the current epidemic related to heroin and opioid abuse. Behavioral Health Network President Patricia



Rehmer, left, and Rushford Medical Director J. Craig Allen, MD, second from right, participated in the discussion. In the center is Kimberly Harrison, HHC Vice President of Government Affairs. Sen. Murphy also spoke with clients at the Middletown facility, which provides treatment for drug and alcohol addiction.



## Listener contacts BHN after tuning in to radio show

A man whose wife is battling an addiction to prescription pain medication connected with the Behavioral Health Network for assistance after he heard Behavioral Health Network President Patricia Rehmer commenting on addiction issues on a radio show last month.

The listener was tuned in to the Pulse of the Region radio show, sponsored by the Metro Hartford Alliance, on Feb. 20 when he heard Rehmer discussing the growing heroin and opioid addiction crisis in Connecticut and rest of the country. Rehmer was being interviewed in a segment that focused on how people are increasingly becoming addicted to opioids that are prescribed to treat pain, and how that addiction can often lead to heroin abuse.

Shortly after the program, which airs Saturdays at 8 a.m. on ESPN 97.9 FM and 9 a.m. on WPOP News Talk 1410 AM, the man sent an email asking to be connected to Rehmer. "I need to find a group where we, the family of someone abusing prescription pills, can get some support," he said.



## Plain Language Training must be done by March 15

All Hartford HealthCare staff must complete the Plain Language Emergency Communications Training on Relias (or your organization's online training module) no later than Tuesday, March 15 at 8 a.m.

Additional resources are available on the HHC Intranet, under Inside Hartford HealthCare, then Public Safety and Emergency Management.

## Opiate Abuse and Community Solutions



### Be part of the Solution!

Come listen, learn, and share your thoughts about this community problem.



**\*\* Wednesday March 9<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 PM \*\***  
**QVCC Auditorium, 742 Upper Maple Street, Danielson, CT**

#### Expert Panellists

- Commissioner Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, PhD - Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Carrie Pichie, PhD, Director of Ambulatory Services - Natchaug Hospital
- Denise Keane, LCSW, Associate Director - Perception Programs, Inc.
- Dr. Catherine Shafts, Regional Medical Director - Generations Family Health Center, Inc.
- Dr. Lee Wesler - Primary Care Physician
- Chief Michael Surprenant - Plainfield Police
- Caitlin Adams, Lead Social Worker/Primary Therapist, Inpatient Behavioral Health Service, Day Kimball Hospital
- Robert Brex, Executive Director, Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse, Inc.
- Lee Konicki, Deputy Police Chief in Putnam

## Family Resource Center Support Groups

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**. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Managing Schizophrenia.** March 8, May 10, 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.
- **Peer Support Group.** March 9, 16, 23, 30 (Every Wednesday of each month), 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. in the Carolina Cottage, Lower Level Conference Room. A peer run support group for those who have a mental illness.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** March 9, March 23, April 13, April 27, May 11, May 25, June 8, June 22 (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.

- **Substance Use Educational And Support Group.** March 10, April 14, May 12, June 9 (Second Thursday of each month), 4 – 5 p.m. For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** March 17, April 7, April 21, May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16 (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 those who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Learn to care for yourself while you are caring for others.

- **Youth Psychosis Family Support Group.** March 17, April 7, April 21, May 5, May 19, June 2, June 16 (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. For parents with youth up to age 18 who have psychotic symptoms such as: hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, disorganized thoughts and behavior or are diagnosed with Schizophrenia and other related disorders.

### Autism Awareness Month Event

All are welcome.

Wednesday, April 6, 2016 | 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm



### Get to know your child's IEP

(Individual Education Program)

Presented by the CT Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC)

Developing the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

This discussion focuses on how parents can be actively and effectively involved in the development of the IEP. Participants will learn the key components of an IEP and will become familiar with current Connecticut IEP forms. The workshop will offer guidance about developing measurable goals and tips for monitoring a student's progress.



Commons Building, Hartford Room, Second Floor, The Institute of Living, 200 Retreat Avenue, Hartford

For more information or to RSVP for March 28, 2016, please contact Goviana Morales at 203.886.9958, or email goviana.morales@hhchealth.org

Institute of Living  
A Division of Hartford Hospital

### Reminder: All Clinical Staff



### Issues of Suicide Support Group

Last Tuesday of Every Month

**Date:** Last Tuesday of Every Month

**Time:** noon – 1 p.m.

**Place:** Family Resource Center  
Massachusetts Cottage  
Group Room - 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

Offering the opportunity for discussion with clinical staff who have experienced issues related to suicide in their work.

**Facilitator:** Nancy E. Hubbard, LCSW

Light lunch will be provided  
RSVP required to 860.545.7665



Institute of Living  
A Division of Hartford Hospital



### Hosted by:

**Elsa M. Núñez**

President of Eastern Connecticut State University  
and

**Pat Rehmer**

President of the Hartford HealthCare  
Behavioral Health Network



### Guest Speaker

Connecticut's Second Chance Society:  
A public health approach to addiction

### Featuring

**Mike Lawlor**

Connecticut Under Secretary for  
Criminal Justice Policy and Planning



### Thursday, March 24, 2016 | Noon-1:30 pm

Betty R. Tipton Room  
Student Center, Eastern Connecticut State University  
Willimantic, Connecticut

Minimum donation of \$100 per guest.  
Sponsored tables of ten available.



### RSVP by March 16 to Sherry Smardon

860.465.5910 or [sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org](mailto:sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org)

*Luncheon sponsored by*

**The ECSU Foundation, Inc.**

All proceeds will benefit Natchaug Hospital's  
educational programs.

Natchaug Hospital  
Connect to healthier.

## Dr. Johnathan Raub appointed associate medical director

Natchaug is pleased to announce that Jonathan Raub, MD, has accepted the position of Associate Medical Director for Inpatient Services. Dr. Raub, who has served in the role on an interim basis since July 2015, will oversee Natchaug medical staff on the child, adolescent and adult inpatient units.



Raub

Dr. Raub joined Natchaug in 2012 as an attending psychiatrist on the child and adolescent inpatient unit.

He completed his medical training at Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University and did his residency in general psychiatry through Weill Cornell Medical College at New York Presbyterian Hospital. Dr. Raub completed a fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Harvard-affiliated Cambridge Health Alliance, and a second fellowship in Forensic Psychiatry, with an emphasis on children and adolescents, at the University of Rochester. Dr. Raub is triple Board certified in general, child and adolescent, and forensic psychiatry.



Find us on Facebook at  
[www.facebook.com/natchaughospital](http://www.facebook.com/natchaughospital)

## Dr. Silverman takes part in special meeting with national drug policy czar



Samuel Silverman, MD, Rushford's Medical Director of Addiction Services and Program Director for the Rushford Addiction Medicine Fellowship, joined a team of addiction medicine specialists who met with Michael Botticelli, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, last month to discuss the crisis in opioid and heroin addiction.

The meeting was hosted by the Connecticut State Medical Society as a way for Botticelli to hear directly from front-line physicians on the challenges they face and recommendations for federal support. Botticelli noted that Connecticut has been at the forefront of opioid efforts, and applauded the state's efforts on issues like prescriber education and the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP). Dr. Silverman is shown above, at far left, in a group photo from the meeting; Botticelli is standing fifth from left, while U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-New Haven, who also attended the meeting, is standing second from left.

## Clinician writes award-winning children's book

Debbie Shapiro, LCSW, an adult mental health clinician at Rushford, was thrilled last year when she was able to finish a longtime "bucket list" goal of writing an illustrated children's book about her dog Barkley.

The book drew on Shapiro's experience several years ago moving to a rural farm in Virginia, and she and illustrator Toby Mickle combined their talents to tell a sweet story about a dog who moves with his family to the countryside.

Shapiro said she was grateful the book, called "Barkley Moves to the Country," was published and printed. But she never expected it to win an award.

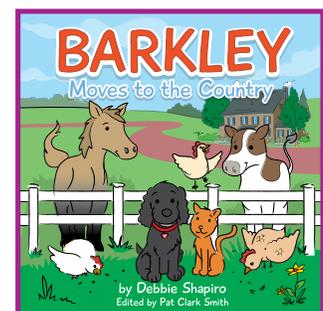


Shapiro

But on Jan. 30, Shapiro found herself accepting an Honorable Mention Award for Best Children's Book at the New England Book Festival in Boston. Her book was one of 25 to be recognized for making contributions to children's literature in 2015.

"I couldn't believe it," said Shapiro. "The book was just something I always wanted to try, but never thought it would go anywhere."

The book, which is meant for younger children, was published by Rhyme Time Books of Connecticut.



## Open House at Cheshire facility

You are invited to an open house at Rushford's new adult outpatient treatment center in Cheshire on Friday, April 22, from noon to 5 p.m.

The clinic is at 680 S. Main St. in Cheshire. There will be refreshments, tours, information on services and other giveaways.

### March is Social Work Month!

- Join us for a lunch and learn, and to celebrate!
- March 18<sup>th</sup>
- 11:30 - 1:30pm
- Paddock Café
- LGBTQ Presentation
- NASW Update
- All clinical disciplines are invited this year- please let your supervisor know if you are interested in attending.



SOCIAL WORK  
**FORGING SOLUTIONS**  
OUT OF CHALLENGES



## 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](mailto:matt.burgard@hhchealth.org) or [amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org](mailto: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.

### FOR SALE

**PINE DINING ROOM TABLE** — Formica top, six chairs, \$375 or best offer. Call **860-886-1800**.

### WANTED

**BOOKS** — The Friends of Otis Library are looking for used hardcover books, in good condition for their Spring Book Sale to be held Friday, April 15, Saturday, April 16, and Sunday, April 17. They can be dropped off at the Library at 261 Main St., Norwich. All proceeds go to the library.

### EVENTS

**NAACP ACT-SO FUNDRAISER** — Order by Friday, March 4, for a Tuesday, March 22 pick up. Bagels for

education, \$6 for a half dozen, plain, spinach, cinnamon raisin. Pick up at 137 Norwich Ave., Taftville. All proceeds benefit the ACT-SO students.

**FISH & CHIPS** — Fridays through Friday, March 18, 3:30-7 p.m. at St. James Episcopal Church Poqueta-nuck, 95 Route 2A, Preston. Baked and fried fish, gift certificates available, cole slaw, fresh bread, desserts, call ahead take out **860-889-0150**.

**LENTEN FISH & CHIPS** — Fridays through Friday, March 25, 4:30-6:30 p.m. at Saint Joseph Church, 120 Cliff St., Norwich. \$9 for a full meal, \$7 for a 1 piece meal, Chowder is \$4.

**NEW YORK CITY TRIP** — Wednesday, March 9, bus trip to New York City, seats are available, \$37.50 per person, bus departs Willimantic at 7:30 a.m., leaves New York City at 8 p.m. For more information, call

Shawn Maynard at **860-377-0377**.

**FLEA MARKET** — Saturday, March 12, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Divine Providence Church, Silver/Golden Sts. Norwich. Indoor and outdoor, Polish breakfast and lunch, Golabki, Pierogi, Kielbasa, baked goods. Vendors welcome. Call **860-887-4265**.

**CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE DINNER** — Saturday, March 12 from 5- 6:30 p.m. at Sprague Community Center, 22 West Main St., Baltic. Adults, \$10, children ages 5 to 10 years old, \$5, children under five years old are free. Take out dinners available. Call **860-822-6595** for ticket reservations by Monday, March 7.

**POWER OF PURPLE** — Thursday, April 7, 10 a.m. at the Norwich Holiday Inn. Special luncheon and art exhibition. Cost is \$36 per person, go to [SafeFuturesCT.org](http://SafeFuturesCT.org) or call **860-447-0366**.

**COURTNEY'S BOSTON MARATHON FUNDRAISER** — 100% of the proceeds will be donated to Courtney's Dana Farber Marathon Challenge Team. Please make a donation by calling 860-917-6558 or email [courtney.smigiel@gmail.com](mailto:courtney.smigiel@gmail.com). Courtney will be running on Monday, April 18 in the Boston Marathon.

**A TOAST TO SPRING** — Saturday, April 30 at the Historic Lyme Art Association. This fundraiser benefits the Old Lyme Town Parks Playground renovation and is sponsored by The Lyme-Old Lyme Junior Women's Club. Call **860-287-1456** for more information.

**THE THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE PROGRAM** — This program provides intensive training and support services to mature, stable adults who wish to provide loving homes to children. Our children are typically ages eight to 18 and have emotional and behavioral needs. With our ongoing training, assistance and support you can successfully meet the challenges of foster parenting. Please call the Waterford Country School Foster Care at **860-886-7500** or visit [wcsfostercare.org](http://wcsfostercare.org).



Hartford HealthCare

**SAVE THE DATE**

**The Fourth Annual Hartford HealthCare Patient Experience Showcase**

Connecting Patients to Healthier

Friday, April 8, 2016 | 7:30 AM to 12:15 PM

Heublein Hall, Education & Resource Center (ERC), Hartford Hospital, 560 Hudson Street, Hartford

Learn, network and collaborate with colleagues and patients to advance the HHC patient experience.

## About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday, except for the weeks of Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's.

Story ideas or submissions may be sent to [matt.burgard@hhchealth.org](mailto:matt.burgard@hhchealth.org) or [amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org](mailto:amanda.nappi@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. Thank you.

**Deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, March 15, at noon.**