Charlotte Hungerford Hospital

Health Matters

Allied Health Professionals: Partners in care with your physician

Chances are you have already met an Allied Health Professional at a hospital, private physician’s office, clinic, nursing home or long-term healthcare facility. In today’s rapidly changing healthcare environment, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital (CHH) and hospitals across the country are working diligently to improve access to care and patient satisfaction with the increased assistance of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses or Nurse Practitioners (APRNs) and physician assistants (PAs).

Referred to as “Allied Health Professionals,” these nationally certified and state-licensed medical professionals work in a variety of medical settings spanning from a primary care office to an operating room. They participate in rigorous medical education and training, where they develop skill sets and perform many tasks similar to those of physicians. These include performing physical exams, writing prescriptions, ordering diagnostic tests, diagnosing and treating conditions, educating patients on health and lifestyle choices and providing follow-up care. In the last decade, the numbers of these professionals has more than doubled due to many factors including the aging of the population and as a response to a shortage of physicians, particularly for primary care.

For healthcare institutions and specialty healthcare service providers, utilizing APRNs and PAs improves access to receiving care and allows patients to be seen by an appropriate provider more quickly, which promotes better outcomes. Additionally, as part of the healthcare team, an APRN or PA has the ability to collaborate with other members of the care team.

Operating Room renovations complete

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital (CHH) has upgraded its Operating Room (OR) facilities in order to continue delivering high-quality care to the residents of northwest Connecticut. The renovation expands the room, upgrades technology and lighting, and improves the HVAC system to better accommodate a wide array of procedures. Begun in May of 2015, the $850,000 investment in the OR complements ongoing quality improvement initiatives and expansion of services as CHH looks to fulfill future demand for surgical services.

The hospital’s OR now includes a revised nurse’s and doctor’s station that provides physicians and staff better control of the environment of care, from the lighting in the room to playing music for the patient undergoing a procedure. The OR utilizes booms for medical equipment, anesthesiology and lighting. The lighting booms also contain video monitors that can be used for either showing a patient’s relevant clinical information while undergoing a procedure. Additionally, the care team can record video of the surgery through sophisticated technology devices. The OR also has monitors mounted on the lighting booms and a 50-inch state-of-the-art monitor which, like the other monitors, can present necessary information. The OR also features more than 29 data ports throughout the room to accommodate smart technology.

“Ensuring that our facility has the latest designs and technology is key to ensuring the best possible care for those who need surgery at CHH,” said John Capobianco, Vice President of Operations.
CHH Neurology Service grows

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital’s Neurology Services is growing! An outpatient department of the hospital and part of its Multi-Specialty Group of Services, the practice has added four neurologists and a physician’s assistant to help accommodate the growing need for services in the northwest corner.

The practice performs neurological evaluations, diagnosis and treatment of diseases and disorders of the brain, spinal cord and nervous system including Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia.

The neurologists are board certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Their clinical interests include multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, stroke, nerve and muscle disorders, movement disorders, Parkinson’s disease, Botrox treatment, myasthenia and headaches.

The staff is committed to providing the highest quality care to help patients achieve and maintain optimal neurological health and encourages active involvement by patients in their care, which is important with specialized diagnostic and treatment programs. Their goal is to provide high quality neurological care in a comfortable and compassionate environment, while preserving the dignity of every patient and protecting their privacy.

CHH improves access to neurology services for patients

Committed to providing the most comprehensive and high-quality health services in northwest Connecticut, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital (CHH) has introduced an innovative partnership with the Hartford Hospital Telehealth Network (HHTN) to improve patients’ access to specialty care. The collaboration with HHTN utilizes neuro-telemedicine, which is the process by which electronic, visual, and audio communications are used by CHH patients to communicate with outside neurologists to provide diagnostic and consultation procedures.

Begun earlier this year, CHH began using the service to provide expert neurology coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The service uses state-of-the-art digital imaging and telecommunications technology to communicate between hospitals. Using this innovative technology, patients can now receive a faster diagnosis and more immediate treatment that often reduces or eliminates the debilitating results of various ailments. For example, with the support of this team of available neurologists, CHH physicians can more readily provide clot-busting drug to patients who have had a stroke when literally seconds matter.

Dr. Kenneth Kaplove, MD, of the CHH Neurology Service, added, “When a patient at CHH first displays symptoms consistent with a neurological condition and a CHH neurologist is not available, the patient’s local multidisciplinary care team now has the ability to consult and collaborate with an additional team of Hartford Hospital board-certified and credentialed neurologists with an average of more than 10 years of experience. Within 15 minutes of CHH’s staff initiating contact with the HHTN, a specialist provides a comprehensive, real-time neurological assessment to help evaluate, diagnose and provide recommendations for treatment. Using the most innovative technology, the patient and his or her family are able to consult with a specialist.

“This service ensures that an experienced neurologist is at a patient’s bedside completing a thorough exam within minutes,” said Patty Sullivan-Polletta, Administrative Director of Ancillary Services at CHH. “It is these types of collaborations for patients and his or her loved ones that demonstrate our commitment to achieving clinical excellence.”

In addition to care for strokes, the HHTN also supports rapid access to consultation for patients displaying symptoms consistent with aneurysms, brain tumors, concussions, epilepsy and other conditions that can affect the head and spine. All CHH patients, regardless of their location within the hospital, have access to these services.

The addition of the technology complements services offered by CHH Neurology Services, part of the CHH Multi-Specialty Group. The CHH neurology care team provides expert consultative, diagnostic and therapeutic services for a full range of neurological conditions.

For information and appointments, please call (860) 626-8232.
The Gathering Place – Where new beginnings begin…

Since opening late last year, The Gathering Place at 21 Prospect Street in Torrington had made a difference on a daily basis for people in need from Litchfield County. The new facility is a day-time “one-stop” drop-in resource center serving local homeless individuals, families and veterans that provides access and coordination of critical social, employment, medical, mental health, substance abuse and education services.

The center’s primary mission is to provide people a pathway to housing, self-sufficiency and to help put an end to homelessness in northwest Connecticut. In addition, the site serves as the centralized location to access mainstream employment services and expand strategies for people experiencing homelessness to obtain and keep employment with the ultimate goal to secure and retain permanent housing. It also gives the homeless population a daytime place to go off the streets and lets them focus on the comprehensive array of services, opportunities and programs available locally and on the state level.

The Gathering Place features a family and child resource area, meeting and conference rooms, laundry, showers, mail delivery, computer and phone access and clothing donations. Seven volunteers assist with reception and clerical work, as well as daily operations and maintenance of the facility. The majority of these volunteers were formerly homeless and wanted to give back to those who helped them.

The Gathering Place was conceived, developed and opened by local nonprofit New Beginnings of Northwest Hills Litchfield County (Continuum of Care) with the support of Charlotte Hungerford Hospital and its Homeless Outreach Team, Torrington Community Housing Corporation, local nonprofits, the City of Torrington, local and state agencies and businesses and a generous seed grant from the Draper Foundation Fund of the Community Foundation of Northwest CT.

New Beginnings of Northwest Hills Litchfield County, formerly Litchfield County Continuum of Care, is a group of concerned social service providers, local agencies and consumers who have come together to address the issue of homelessness in Litchfield County. Over the past 15 years, New Beginnings has been awarded over $6 million to assist housing the homeless, including Section 8 housing and rental assistance vouchers and funding for the acquisition and rehabilitation of local buildings to serve as housing.

“The homeless population encompasses all races, ethnicities, genders, gender identities and ages,” said Nancy Cannavo, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital Homeless Outreach Coordinator. “Having a single location with social service counselors in place will allow homeless individuals and families to learn more about available options in the Northwest corner.”

The Gathering Place relies on community financial support and is a nonprofit that accepts donations to assist with its ongoing operation and programs. To donate, please make checks payable to New Beginnings of Northwest Hills Litchfield County and mail to 21 Prospect Street, Torrington, CT, 06790. The Gathering Place is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For more information, call (860) 618-3455.

Breast health treatment options close to home

The Center For Cancer Care, a partnership of Charlotte Hungerford Hospital and the Smilow Cancer Hospital Care Center at Torrington, delivers high-quality services to the people of northwest Connecticut, bringing together the best professionals, technology, and breast healthcare programs/treatment options.

After a breast cancer diagnosis, patients have several treatment options that include the latest, most effective treatments, including Hypofractionated External Beam Radiation Therapy, MammomSite Radiation Therapy and prone breast treatment.

Hypofractionated External Beam Radiation Therapy delivers a slightly higher dose of radiation during each treatment in order to reduce the overall treatment course. Many breast cancer patients are eligible for Hypofractionated External Beam Radiation Therapy, which involves 16 treatments over three and a half weeks compared with the standard six weeks of daily radiation therapy. This method has resulted in excellent cosmetic outcomes and local control that is comparable to longer radiation courses.

A second option for a shorter treatment course is MammomSite Radiation Therapy, which requires that patients only receive treatment for five days. Treatment is given with a small catheter that is temporarily placed at the lumpectomy site in the patient’s breast. Radiation is delivered via the catheter to the area where cancer is most likely to occur.

Both options are done on an outpatient basis, and no hospital stay is required.

Robert Taylor, Manager and Chief Therapist at the center, said, “We appreciate how important options are to our patients. By working collaboratively with our patients, we are able to design customized treatment plans that meet their needs while also utilizing the current and advanced care techniques.”

The center and other CHH hospital programs offer a variety of resources to individuals living with breast cancer through a comprehensive network of specialized imaging services, a breast health navigation program, a team of highly skilled surgeons, cancer treatment, clinical trials directed by top-notch specialists and state-of-the-art radiation therapy.

For more information about the Hungerford Breast Health Center, please call (860) 496-6819 or visit www.charlottehungerford.org.

Allied Health Professionals

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physicians and providers in order to ensure that the patient receives the best possible care. They also perform valuable tasks and tests that allow physicians to spend more time with each patient.

“APRNs are an essential part of our healthcare team helping us provide more timely care to patients,” said Stacy Taylor, MD, of CHH Primary Care Torrington which has several APRNs on staff.

Egils Bogdanovics, MD, of CHH Diabetes & Endocrinology, who also has an APRN in his office, agrees. “Our APRN Dave is a welcome addition to the Charlotte Hungerford Diabetes Center. He is a team player and a strong advocate for excellent patient care,” he said.

WHERE YOU’LL FIND US

- CHH Radiation Oncology staff, (from left, Elizabeth Whalen, MD, Sherry Kennerson, RT(T), Robert J. Taylor, RT(T), CMD, and Pam Ciccarelli, RN.
- CHH Adult & Pediatric Urology
- CHH Cardiovascular Medicine
- CHH Diabetes and Endocrinology
- CHH Emergency Department
- CHH Medical Walk-In
- CHH Neurology
- CHH Primary Care – Thomaston
- CHH Primary Care – Torrington
- CHH Surgical Associates

PAs and APRNs are utilized at CHH in the following areas:
New Safe Steps program promotes balance

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital’s Registered Dietitian Carla Angevine offers these nutrition tips for people of all ages on how to maintain a healthy diet throughout the year.

**EATING RIGHT ON A BUDGET**

Getting the most nutrition for your food budget starts with a little extra planning before you shop. Here are some budget-friendly tips for eating right.

- **Plan what you’re going to eat.** When you shop with a list, you will be less likely to buy extra items that are not on it.
- **Decide how much to make.** Making a large amount will save time and money.
- **Determine where to shop.** Check the local newspaper, online and at the store for sales and coupons, especially when it comes to more expensive ingredients.
- **Shop for foods that are in season.** Fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season are usually easier to get and may be a lot less expensive.

**VEG GI ES FO R B R EA K FA ST? YES!**

Fruit fits easily into breakfast, but vegetables can be a challenge. Try these tips to wake up your appetite to veggies.

- **Get scrambling!** Add fresh or frozen chopped spinach, mushrooms, and diced tomatoes to scrambled eggs or omelets.
- **Batter up.** Add grated carrots or zucchini to pancake, quick bread or muffin batter.
- **Drink your produce.** Mix carrots and fresh orange juice in a blender for a refreshing breakfast beverage.
- **Make a breakfast burrito** by wrapping low-fat cheddar cheese, scrambled eggs and diced bell peppers in a whole-wheat tortilla.

**EATING RIGHT WITH LESS SALT**

Most Americans are getting too much sodium from the foods they eat. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that everyone, even children, reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams a day. That’s about the same amount of sodium in one teaspoon of salt.

- **Focus on fresh foods.** Many foods in their original form, are naturally low in sodium.
- **Eat processed and prepared foods less often.** Highly processed and ready-to-eat foods tend to be higher in sodium.
- **Cook more often at home.** Enjoy home-prepared foods where you are in control of how much salt is added.

**Making good nutrition a priority**

Carla Angevine, MS, RD, CDN, is a registered dietitian nutritionist and ACE certified health coach at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital. She is licensed by the State of Connecticut and registered by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Angevine and her team offer nutrition counseling for a variety of health conditions. They are trained to provide a comprehensive nutrition assessment, which includes planning and implementing nutrition interventions using evidence-based nutrition practice guidelines, and monitoring and evaluating an individual’s progress.

A physician referral is required to schedule an appointment with a dietitian. For more information, contact Carla Angevine at (860) 496-6676.

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital

Charlotte Hungerford Hospital (CHH) Auxiliary recently donated a Glidescope valued at $12,000 to be used exclusively in the hospital’s Intensive Care Unit. It provides a consistently clear, real-time view of the patient’s airway during the placement of breathing tubes. This helps the doctor better visualize the process, making it safer and quicker. The new Glidescope will be dedicated to the ICU unit and be immediately available when needed for patients. CHH uses Glidescopes in many areas of the hospital including the operating room and the emergency department.

CHH Auxiliary donates Glidescope for ICU

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