CHA Special Edition of Update: Annual Meeting Awards

The Connecticut Hospital Association will hold its 101st Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 20, 2019, at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington. The theme for the celebration, A Shared Vision For A Healthy Future, reflects CHA’s work with many partners on multiple fronts—from improving patient safety to addressing social determinants of health, and finding sustainable funding solutions to ensure a vibrant healthcare system for the future.

The meeting will feature CHA’s annual awards, including the John D. Thompson Award for Excellence in the Delivery of Healthcare Through the Use of Data, the Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award, the Healthcare Heroes awards, the American Hospital Association (AHA) Grassroots Champion Award, and the AHA Service Awards.

The keynote address will be delivered by Jeff Flake, who served as U.S. Senator from Arizona from 2013-2019, and as a member of the United States House of Representatives from 2001-2013. Known for his ability to work across the political aisle, Senator Flake took a stand for principle and civility in an era of hyper-partisanship in his New York Times bestseller, Conscience of a Conservative: A Rejection of Destructive Politics and a Return to Principle. His 2018 Senate floor speech titled “Truth and Democracy” was carried live on CNN, MSNBC, and the FOX News Channel.

CHA gratefully acknowledges the generous Annual Meeting sponsorship of our Platinum Sponsors: Berkeley Research Group and Wiggin and Dana.

Norwalk Hospital to Receive the 2019 John D. Thompson Award for Excellence in the Delivery of Healthcare Through the Use of Data

At its 101st Annual Meeting on June 20, 2019, CHA will recognize Norwalk Hospital as the recipient of the 2019 John D. Thompson Award for Excellence in the Delivery of Healthcare Through the Use of Data for improving the integration of care for patients receiving joint replacement surgery by implementing a Total Joint Replacement Destination Center of Excellence. The goal was to improve key program metrics: length of stay, discharge home, and patient satisfaction.

“Norwalk Hospital demonstrated that its patient- and family-centered multidisciplinary approach, along with applying best practices and reducing variation, led to better outcomes and greater patient satisfaction,” said Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. “Norwalk uses data to both measure and drive the program’s success. We are proud to honor Norwalk Hospital with the John D. Thompson Award.”

Prior to developing and implementing the Destination Center in 2012, Norwalk Hospital’s patient satisfaction scores were not optimal. The vast majority of patients were discharged to extended care facilities, length of stay was higher than the national average, and surgeons followed varying protocols.

The hospital’s overarching operational goal was to create a cohesive patient experience. This required establishing a dedicated, multidisciplinary care team whose members were the architects of the new program. Surgeons set aside personal preference to formulate standardized care pathways, which required consensus on surgical dressings, medications, precautions, and equipment. The team developed robust protocols for SSI prevention, pre-operative medications, and blood utilization. A framework of program messaging was established, beginning with the simple expectation that patients should return home after surgery. Patients and caregivers were educated on what to expect; this is a highlight of the program, and the hospital identified a direct correlation between patients and caregivers who attended a pre-op class and those who returned home, had good clinical outcomes, and reported high satisfaction. A cohorted care unit was created, staffed exclusively by specialized team members, enabling Norwalk to offer a consistent, reproducible, high-quality experience. The hospital also advocated for non-opioid pain management options and agents to minimize nausea and intraoperative bleeding. Over time, these interventions decreased complications, transfusions, and days in the hospital. The hospital also executed a culture change of nurse-driven early and frequent mobility, and integrated the assistance of a patient navigator.

Multiple measures of patient care are monitored. Each quarter, data are extracted and validated. Outliers are investigated by the Orthopedic Program Coordinator through individual chart audit to identify trends. Press Ganey patient satisfaction survey scores are uploaded into the dashboard. ChimeData is reported during quarterly dashboard data reviews conducted with the surgeons, the Performance Improvement Team (PIT), leadership, and key stakeholders. The data dashboard and ChimeData provides transparency and validity in reporting that drives key performance improvements.

In 2017, five years after the Total Joint Replacement Destination Center of Excellence was implemented, the program achieved 75th percentile ranking among a database of 300 top-performing hospitals in six key performance metrics: discharge home, length of stay, readmissions, blood transfusions, distance walked, and overall satisfaction. The program has sustained this high performance level through data transparency and team engagement.

CHA to Recognize Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent’s Medical Center with the 2019 Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award
At its 101st Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 20, 2019, CHA and the Connecticut Department of Public Health will award the 2019 Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award to Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent's Medical Center for the Know Your Numbers program.

Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent’s Medical Center are lead hospitals for Greater Bridgeport’s Health Improvement Alliance (HIA). Since 2003, HIA has focused on improving health outcomes in the greater Bridgeport area through a collective impact approach that brings together healthcare, academic, and not-for-profit partners. One outcome of this collaboration has been Know Your Numbers (KYN), which has provided free health screenings for the underserved population in local food pantries since 2014.

Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent’s Medical Center are dedicated to continued enhancement of KYN. Both hospitals contribute roughly a combined $20,000 annually towards KYN and together dedicate three full-time staff members to the program’s implementation and continued expansion. In addition to these staff members, approximately a dozen volunteers help at each screening, including hospital staff and local nursing students.

“We applaud the collaboration between Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent’s Medical Center to provide, through the Know Your Numbers program, health screenings and education to the underserved community in Bridgeport,” said Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. “By considering the whole person – including their social determinants of health – Know Your Numbers is improving lives. We are proud to honor Bridgeport Hospital and St. Vincent’s Medical Center with this award.”

More than 2,500 individual KYN health screenings have been completed, including 203 at 10 area food pantries in February 2019. Screening protocols changed this year; hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) screening was added to measure blood sugar averages over three months. This helps to identify people who are in the pre-diabetic range and may not know it, which is an important time to counsel someone on how it can be reversed with lifestyle changes.

Additionally, during the 2019 screenings, KYN began to offer automated blood pressure (BP) cuffs to those with elevated BP. Cuffs were distributed along with education on how and when to properly monitor BP at home. A total of 120 food pantry clients met the criteria for elevated BP and received the cuffs. This was 59% of the total people who were screened.

Community Health Workers were present at each screening and referred 35 people (17%) to local resources, including follow-up medical care and other needed community resources. KYN also teamed up with SNAPed to provide nutrition counseling at every site to those who screened high for BP or HbA1c. This nutrition counseling is key to helping people learn ways to improve their health numbers.

KYN began in 2014 as a way to educate the community about knowing their own health numbers, and has evolved to become a multifaceted approach to improve the health of food pantry clients. Utilizing KYN screenings, referrals to follow-up care and community resources, as well as nutrition education initiatives, HIA plans to continue to work collaboratively to improve health outcomes of Bridgeport’s most vulnerable residents.

**CHA to Recognize Gaylord Specialty Healthcare with the 2019 Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award**

At its 101st Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 20, 2019, CHA and the Connecticut Department of Public Health will award the 2019 Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award to Gaylord Specialty Healthcare for its Gynecological Clinic for Women with Disabilities.

Gaylord Specialty Healthcare is known for its leadership in treating individuals with spinal cord injuries. When staff identified that women with spinal cord injuries were considerably less apt to seek regular gynecological care, they established in 1999 a clinic to care for these patients.

“Through this unique clinic, Gaylord Specialty Healthcare lives its mission to enhance health, maximize function, and transform lives,” noted Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. “Effectively addressing an unmet need in its community with its Gynecological Clinic for Women with Disabilities, Gaylord Specialty Healthcare has been improving health outcomes of women with disabilities for 20 years. We are proud to honor Gaylord Specialty Healthcare with this award.”

After a spinal cord injury, many women aren’t able to access services at standard OB/GYN offices as they can’t transfer to a typical exam table. Some doctors are uncomfortable or unaware of how to treat women with special needs. Women with spinal cord injuries cannot feel if something is wrong so it is vital to get regular checkups to screen and prevent UTIs, infections, address pressure sores, and for early cancer detection. Women who have had strokes, Multiple Sclerosis, amputations, developmental or mental disabilities may also feel more comfortable at a clinic that offers adaptive equipment and care by a professional who understands and advocates for those with disabilities.

Anna Tirado, MD, is the primary OB/GYN provider, and provides her clinic services pro bono. This year, Gaylord’s Gynecological Clinic for Women with Disabilities celebrated its 20th anniversary. The clinic is open twice a month and sees 10-15 patients each month. Every patient receives care well beyond the time and scope expected at a typical gynecology visit.

“The clinic’s benefit to the community is immeasurable, drawing patients throughout the state. Finding talented physicians willing to treat disabled patients is difficult, but Dr. Anna Tirado actively seeks new ways to improve women’s access to care,” said Chief Medical Officer Stephen Holland, MD.

**Hartford HealthCare’s David A. Whitehead Named Connecticut’s 2019 Grassroots Champion**

The American Hospital Association (AHA) and CHA will recognize David A. Whitehead, Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer, Hartford HealthCare, as Connecticut’s 2019 Grassroots Champion at CHA’s 101st Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 20, 2019.

As the 2019 Grassroots Champion, Mr. Whitehead is being recognized for his exceptional leadership in educating elected officials on how issues affect hospitals’ ability to serve their communities or perform their vital role, as well as his commitment to broaden the base of community support for hospitals and health systems. During his tenure as Chairman of the CHA Board, he worked tirelessly to ensure that the hospital community was united in its advocacy and spoke with a strong and unified voice.

Mr. Whitehead is Immediate Past Chairman of the CHA Board of Trustees, currently serves as Chairman of CHA’s Committee on Population Health, and is a member of the Financial Oversight Committee and CHA’s Diversified Network Services Board.

“During a time of turbulence in healthcare, both in Connecticut and across the nation, Dave Whitehead provided unwavering leadership in bringing hospitals together to advocate with a powerful voice,” said Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. “He is focused on transforming care and ensuring strong communities. We are so pleased to honor Dave as the 2019 Grassroots Champion.”
Since 2016, Mr. Whitehead has served as Hartford HealthCare’s Executive Vice President, and Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer. His current role involves creating a high-quality, integrated, accessible health network for communities in Hartford HealthCare’s service area. Prior to that role, he was President of the Hartford HealthCare East Region, which includes The William W. Backus Hospital, Windham Hospital, and a growing number of outpatient and ambulatory centers throughout Eastern Connecticut.

Mr. Whitehead has been involved with a wide variety of community organizations. He has held leadership positions on the Board of Trustees for the Norwich Free Academy, a regional independent high school, United Way, Three Rivers Community College, and Hospice Southeastern Connecticut. He served as Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut, and was recognized as Eastern Connecticut Citizen of the Year.

The AHA Grassroots Champion Award, given annually to one person in each state, was created to recognize hospital leaders who effectively educate elected officials about how major issues affect hospitals’ roles in the community, who have expanded the base of community support for hospitals, and who have been advocates for hospitals and patients.

CHA Honors Healthcare Heroes

One Healthcare Hero rescued a paralyzed man and his wife from flood waters, two parlayed personal heartbreaks into better care for patients, three traveled overseas to bring medical services and healthcare knowledge to the underserved, and an entire hospital became heroes during a tragic incident. These are just some of the stories of the 2019 Healthcare Heroes. Each year, CHA recognizes an inspiring and committed group of individuals from across the state who embody the best in their profession. The following Healthcare Heroes will be acknowledged at the 101st CHA Annual Meeting on June 20, 2019.

**Melissa Beecher**, RN, The Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, turned the devastating loss of her son a year ago into a way to assist and comfort other families who are experiencing the same tragic situation and heartbreak of losing an infant by introducing the Cuddle Cot at the hospital. This unique bassinette allows families to spend extra time with their baby by regulating the child’s temperature after a stillbirth.

**Howard Boey**, MD, MidState Medical Center, has been heeding the call to heal impoverished populations for more than a decade by bringing specialized surgeries to patients in Ecuador. His inherent humanitarian spirit moves him, literally 6,000 miles round trip a year, to care for children and adults who need head and neck surgery, but who barely have access to basic medical services.

**Chas Broadus**, Surgical Technician, Yale New Haven Hospital, is caring, compassionate, and considerate. Whether it’s providing reassuring words to patients in the operating room or helping colleagues through difficult times, Mr. Broadus is the first to lend a hand.

**James Carilli**, Interventional Radiology Technologist, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, founded the Drive to Survive Foundation, which holds an annual Halloween event to raise money to help families with children who have been diagnosed with cancer. The organization also seeks to provide positive inspiration to help fight childhood cancer.

**Waseem Chaudhry**, MD, a cardiologist at Hartford HealthCare’s Heart and Vascular Institute, shared his knowledge of western medicine, supplies, and techniques with refugees in Syria as part of a team of 39 specialists offering free care through a mission trip organized by the Syrian American Medical Society.

**Christine Ieronimo**, RN, Bristol Health, established a program that provides receiving blankets to expectant mothers at a maternity clinic in Gimbichu, Ethiopia. The project has become an ongoing source for providing local Ethiopian women with both physical comfort and confidence in using the clinic’s services.

**Amy Faith Lionheart**, Network Manager Volunteer Services, Nuvance Health, transformed the Volunteer Department into a high-performing team who share a common vision, goals, metrics, and who collaborate, challenge, and hold each other accountable to achieve outstanding results.

**Middexse Health** staff from across the continuum of care and throughout the hospital were impacted on a February morning in 2018 when a car was deliberately crashed through the Emergency Department erupting in flames. While the actions taken by many that day can be described as heroic, Middexse employees simply did what they do best—their jobs.

**Naomi Rachliff** has been volunteering at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital for about 75 years, starting as a 15-year-old candy striper, working her way up to become President of the L+M Hospital Auxiliary, then joining the Board of Directors, where she rose to Vice Chairperson.

**Meli Rokocaba**, Security Officer, Greenwich Hospital, tuned to the safety and well-being of his community with a courageous act that left one elderly couple extremely grateful. During a heavy rainstorm that caused widespread
flash flooding across Connecticut, Mr. Rokocaba rescued an incapacitated elderly couple from their car.

Anna Tirado, MD, a gynecologist at Gaylord Specialty Healthcare, launched Gaylord's Gynecological Clinic for Women with Disabilities 20 years ago. She sees patients with spinal cord injuries, strokes, Multiple Sclerosis, amputations, developmental or mental disabilities, and each patient receives care well beyond the time and scope that would be expected at a typical gynecological visit.

Next Week's Update to be Published on Friday

Because CHA's 2019 Annual Meeting will occur next Thursday, June 20, 2019, next week's edition of CHA Update will be published on Friday, June 21, 2019.