CHA and Thomas Jefferson University Announce Population Health Partnership

On December 16, CHA and Thomas Jefferson University in Pennsylvania announced a two-year partnership to advance population health that heralds a new era of collaboration between hospital associations and educational organizations. The partnership will allow both entities to share expertise and best practices as they advance the tenets and practices of population health.

“The collaboration with the Jefferson College of Population Health at Thomas Jefferson University is an important step toward our shared goals of improving population health management and the health of communities,” said Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. “It will enable us to share knowledge, best practices, and research that will benefit Connecticut and positively impact people across the country.”

As part of the collaboration, Mary Reich Cooper, MD, JD, and CHA’s Chief Quality Officer since 2012, will serve as the Director of the Jefferson College of Population Health programs in healthcare quality and safety. In this capacity, she will oversee the curricula for the Master of Science and Certificate programs in Healthcare Quality and Safety, and teach key courses in these programs. Dr. Cooper, who is responsible for leading CHA’s efforts to implement High Reliability at all Connecticut hospitals to eliminate preventable patient harm, is an industry leader in quality and patient safety.

"With the addition of Dr. Cooper to our faculty, we are excited to have a unique partnership that will allow our students to benefit from the knowledge and resources possessed by an executive leader at a state hospital association,” said David B. Nash, MD, MBA, Dean of the Jefferson College of Population Health. “We hope that it can serve as a model for future collaborations across the country.”

“As knowledge in quality and safety expands across the continuum and hospitals partner with their patients and their communities, we have new opportunities to improve care. We are very excited to be partnering with Jefferson’s College of Population Health and bringing applied knowledge to leaders in Connecticut,” said Dr. Cooper.

Established in 2008, the Jefferson College of Population Health, the first educational institution of its kind in the nation, is dedicated to exploring the policies and influences that shape the health and well-being of populations. The mission of the College is to prepare future healthcare leaders to evaluate, develop, and implement health policies and systems that will benefit populations by preventing disease, emphasizing wellness, and stressing patient-provider partnerships.

Connecticut hospitals play a major and continually expanding role in population health management and improving the health of the communities they serve. CHA supports that work by facilitating care coordination and optimization across the continuum, and focusing on integrated, equitable care. Earlier this year, CHA launched the Statewide Asthma Initiative to improve patient care and access, and transform community partner and hospital relationships. Additionally, CHA has taken a leadership role to improve health equity and reduce disparities, and continues facilitating the efforts of Connecticut hospitals to reduce preventable patient harm.

Dr. Cooper came to Connecticut from Rhode Island, where she was Senior Vice President and Chief Quality Officer for Lifespan Corporation, a four-hospital health system based in Providence. She was an Assistant Professor in Medicine (Research) at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and a Member of the Rhode Island State Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline. She also previously served as Chief Quality Officer at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. Dr. Cooper received her undergraduate degree cum laude
Establishing Palliative Care Teams at Hospitals Makes for Better Healthcare

The importance of palliative care for people suffering from serious illness, its roots in Connecticut, and implementation in Connecticut hospitals were discussed during a day-long forum at CHA on December 15.

The primary message of the forum was that palliative care is not at odds with curative medicine but rather is a necessary addition to the treatment of patients who are suffering from the symptoms, pain, and emotional stress of serious illnesses.

Although many people associate palliative care with end-of-life hospice care or pain relief, speakers at the forum said this is a misunderstanding of the wide-ranging benefits of palliative care, which also functions as a way to help patients and doctors link medical care with the patient’s wishes and needs.

“Palliative care is not hospice. It’s an extra layer of support,” said Rosemary Gibson, Senior Advisor of The Hastings Center. While she was the program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Ms. Gibson facilitated the funding of more than 1500 hospital-based palliative care programs.

Part of that support is helping patients make informed choices about treatment options, Ms. Gibson said, by asking what is important to them as they live with illness. That could mean rejecting further tests or treatments that are not in line with a patient’s needs or priorities, particularly when there is no hope of a cure.

Ms. Gibson also discussed how the spread of palliative care in American hospitals began as a result of the spread of physician-assisted suicide popularized by Dr. Jack Kevorkian in the 1990s. “The American medical establishment was mortified that people were so desperate they were going to Kevorkian and dying in motel rooms,” Ms. Gibson said. “What an indictment of American medicine. We were doing a terrible, terrible job.” Since then, palliative care has become a national movement.

The forum also featured a hospital panel comprising representatives from Hartford HealthCare, Western Connecticut Health Network, and the Yale New Haven Health System, who described their palliative care teams and implementation of palliative care throughout their hospitals. Although each hospital on the panel approached the task of establishing their palliative care teams differently, they all recounted a similar phenomenon, which was that the success of their programs depended on getting them absorbed into the different departments at the hospitals and, in some cases, into the community.

The Greenwich Hospital team is now doing 1,000 consults a year, said Donna Coletti, MD, Medical Director, Palliative Care, Greenwich Hospital. Ross Albert, MD, PhD, who heads the Division of Palliative Medicine at Hartford Hospital, and Damanjeet Chaubey, MD, MPH, who is the section chief of Hospital Medicine at Danbury Hospital, reported similar successes.

Participants also took part in a workshop on end-of-life discussions with The Conversation Project, which is dedicated to helping people talk about their wishes for end-of-life care.

Attendees at the forum also heard from Steve Corman, a Connecticut resident and cancer survivor who, along with his wife, helped establish the palliative care program at Greenwich Hospital by donating $1 million. Mr. Corman’s wife, Betsy, died from cancer and “ended up receiving palliative care before the end of her life,” he said, which was fitting given her contribution to the cause.

The program was co-sponsored with Qualidigm.

CHA Director Touts Connecticut’s Safety Efforts at National Forum

Alison Hong, MD, Director of Quality and Patient Safety at CHA, spoke about Connecticut’s efforts to change the safety culture in hospitals during a panel on national quality strategy design at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) national forum in Florida last week.

Dr. Hong said the focus of her panel was to describe lessons they had learned while implementing quality measures in their respective countries. The panel also featured incoming IHI President and CEO Derek Feeley, the former Director General for Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of the National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland; Nneka Mobisson-Etuk, MD, Executive Director of African Operations, IHI, and former CHA VP; and Enrique Ruelas, MD, IHI Senior Fellow, who served as Secretary of the General Health Council of Mexico.

“The shared message was that one size doesn’t fit all,” said Dr. Hong. “Each strategy has to be fairly local, but also fluid. Connecticut represented the U.S. as one model of improvement.”

Dr. Hong said her presentation touted the commitment from hospital leaders and Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA, to change the safety culture in Connecticut’s hospitals. She also spoke about the design of a flexible, collaborative model and the implementation of both technical and adaptive changes to achieve zero events of harm.

Connecticut hospitals have changed their culture through implementing a first-of-its-kind statewide initiative to eliminate all-cause preventable harm using high reliability science. That movement has resulted in tens of thousands of staff and physicians in Connecticut trained in high reliability safety behaviors. It has also been expanded to engage patients and families in quality and patient safety through person and family advisory councils.

IHI’s 27th Annual National Forum on Quality Improvement in Health Care took place December 6-9 in Orlando, Florida.

John F. Rodis, MD, Named President of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center

John F. Rodis, MD, MBA, has come full circle. Thirty years ago, he first stepped onto the Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center campus to train as a fellow in maternal-fetal medicine. On January 1, 2016, he will take the helm as its President.
"I'm excited to lead the hospital with its important role as part of Trinity Health - New England," Dr. Rodis said. “I'm also thrilled about our recent partnership with Smilow Cancer Hospital as well as all the relationships we will build upon with our physicians, the community, and other hospitals. We are going to expand on our mission and continue to provide the same high-quality, patient-centered care that we have for more than 116 years.”

As a physician leader, Dr. Rodis has balanced guiding women through difficult pregnancies while solving complex administrative problems in hospitals and carving out time to author more than 100 peer-reviewed academic papers. He serves as an examiner for the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, testing physicians to determine whether they will become board-certified.

In addition, Dr. Rodis will draw on his life experience as the son of Greek immigrants who taught him the value of hard work and education during his early years in Brooklyn, NY.

“I spent a decade of summers and Christmas vacations working in a diner doing every job from busboy to dishwasher to waiter to short-order cook, learning that every role in a business is vitally important to its success,” Dr. Rodis said. He also appreciates the value and importance of family, drawing strength from his wife of 28 years, Marytherese Conway Rodis, and their three daughters.

Dr. Rodis earned his undergraduate degree in biology from Cornell University and received his medical degree from the Autonomous University of Guadalajara, Mexico. He completed his residency training in obstetrics and gynecology at St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center in New Jersey and his fellowship in maternal-fetal medicine at UConn Health. He went on to complete another fellowship in clinical genetics at UConn Health. This year, Dr. Rodis earned his Master of Business Administration from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

He previously served as Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Stamford Hospital and then as Chief Medical Officer before coming to Saint Francis in 2011 as Chair of OB-GYN. He holds the academic rank of Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, as well as the Frank H. Netter, MD, School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University. At Saint Francis, Dr. Rodis has most recently served as its Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer.

“I am truly honored to be given the chance to lead Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, with its highly skilled physicians and nurses and all the passionate staff committed to delivering the highest-quality medical care possible,” Dr. Rodis said.

### Hartford HealthCare Announces Two Leadership Changes

On December 17, Hartford HealthCare (HHC) announced two leadership changes:

David Whitehead, President of the HHC East Region, which includes Backus Hospital and Windham Hospital, will become Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer for Hartford HealthCare. Bimal Patel, HHC’s Vice President for Operational Integration, will become President of the East Region.

Both retain their roles as senior vice presidents of the system.

“We take great pleasure in making this announcement, as it is an example of the deep and exceptional talent we have within Hartford HealthCare,” said Elliot Joseph, President and Chief Executive Officer of Hartford HealthCare.

David Whitehead has led Backus Hospital since 2009, and Windham Hospital since 2012.

At Backus Hospital, he served as Vice President for Communications and then Strategy before being named President and Chief Executive Officer in 2009. Backus became a member of Hartford HealthCare in 2012.

At Windham Hospital, he has created a comprehensive cornerstone care model to transform Windham Hospital, and he will continue to be actively involved and responsible for the implementation of that model in his new role.

David Whitehead has also led HHC’s successful strategic growth, with a focus on outpatient services and building a strong ambulatory network. He has been actively involved in leadership positions on a variety of civic and community organizations.

“I very much look forward to my new role,” Mr. Whitehead said. “It connects three areas of healthcare I feel passionate about: strategy, communications, and transformation.”

He replaces James Blazar, who has accepted a leadership position at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey.

Bimal Patel, who has been part of HHC’s team for seven years, has had wide-ranging professional experience. Trained as a pharmacist, he has worked for Cardinal Health and later served in various leadership roles for clinical ancillary, professional, and support services for the Guthrie Health System at Robert Packer Hospital in Pennsylvania, which was named a Truven Top 100 hospital.

Mr. Patel joined HHC in 2009, as Vice President for Support Services at Hartford Hospital. He became a Regional Vice President for Operations in 2013 and assumed a broader system role as Senior Vice President for Operational Integration a little more than a year ago.

Mr. Patel has led major system initiatives, including HHC 2020, an infrastructure master plan; and worked closely with physicians and other stakeholders on the major expansion of the Center for Education, Simulation and Innovation (CESI), and the development of the Bone & Joint Institute. He has worked closely with all of HHC’s clinical councils, and was responsible for the operations of HHC’s support services.

“This is a great opportunity, and I look forward to being part of the East Region team,” Mr. Patel said. “I have had the pleasure of working with many Backus and Windham Hospital staff members, and I believe the future is bright for healthcare in eastern Connecticut.”

“Both of these senior vice presidents have proven track records of success,” said Jeffrey Flaks, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Hartford HealthCare. “They have demonstrated the ability to think strategically and execute complex plans carefully. Most importantly, both have shown time and again that their core values are solidly aligned with those of our organization.”
Long-Term State Representative From Stratford Loses Battle With Brain Cancer

After a five-year battle with brain cancer, 12-term State Representative Terry Backer (D-Stratford) passed away on Tuesday, December 15. Rep. Backer, a fisherman who spent years harvesting lobster and shellfish from the Long Island Sound, was also Executive Director of the not-for-profit organization Soundkeeper Fund.


East Lyme Representative Announces He Will Not Seek Re-Election

On Friday, December 11, State Representative Ed Jutila (D-East Lyme), announced that he would not seek re-election in 2016. First elected in 2004, Rep. Jutila is the co-chairman of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, and has been a member of the Transportation Committee. During his tenure in the General Assembly, Rep. Jutila served as vice chairman of the General Law Committee and the Public Safety and Security Committee. He also served as assistant majority leader and deputy majority whip. The House District currently occupied by Rep. Jutila includes the towns of East Lyme and Salem.

Education Updates

Perinatal Quality Collaborative’s Improving Birth Outcomes: Approaches to Maternal Morbidity and Mortality

Thursday, January 7, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Event Registration

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) and the Perinatal Quality Collaborative are sponsoring a day-long program, Improving Birth Outcomes: Approaches to Maternal Morbidity and Mortality. The program is being held in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, the Connecticut Maternal Child Health (MCH) Coalition, and the Connecticut Chapter of the March of Dimes.

The program will begin with the perspective of a patient who will share her experience with postpartum hemorrhage. This presentation will be followed by Dr. Elizabeth Deckers from Hartford Hospital who will discuss the national experience and current science on maternal morbidity and mortality. An overview of Connecticut’s perinatal landscape will be presented by Raul Pino, DPH Deputy Commissioner; Marijane Carey, Manager of the MCH Coalition; and Jordana Frost, State Director of Program Services at the March of Dimes.

Afternoon panel presentations will focus on behavioral health and perinatal depression, as well as the benefits of optimal interconception care. Information on a MCH Coalition initiative addressing pre/interconception care will be provided.

The program is being presented as part of the Partnership for Patients HEN 2.0 educational series.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

Lean Principles: Process Flow and Value Stream Mapping in Healthcare

Session One: Thursday, January 7, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
View Brochure | Event Registration

As the demands of health reform drive change in all areas of healthcare delivery, hospital leaders are focused on transforming their organizations through strategies that simultaneously increase revenue and sharply reduce costs. Lean principles offer leaders a management system and methodology that improves team engagement, eliminates roadblocks, and allows hospitals to improve the quality of care for patients by reducing errors and waste streams, including wait times. It is a systematic approach to reducing costs and risks, while simultaneously setting the stage for growth and expansion.

Please note: this is a two-session program, participants must attend both sessions.

Continuing education credits will be awarded. Please see the brochure for more details.

Cross Cultural and Diversity Inclusiveness Training

Session One: Friday, January 8, 2016
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
This program is being held at the Connecticut Institute for Primary Care Innovation (CIPCI) in Hartford.

In partnership with the Hispanic Health Council, the Saint Francis Center for Health Equity, and the Connecticut Association of Healthcare Executives, CHA is again pleased to offer Cross Cultural & Diversity Inclusiveness Training (CC&DIT)—a unique, comprehensive, and
interactive program to achieve the goal of improving cultural competence in the delivery of care and addressing healthcare disparities.

The CC&DIT curriculum was developed in direct response to member requests for help in providing diversity education and is structured as a two-module program, each session five hours in duration—delivered once each week over a two-week period. Training content is based on current research that emphasizes the idea that cultural competence is not achieved through a single training event—but is a lifelong commitment to learning, and professional skills development. With over 200 members completing the training, program evaluations have been consistently positive about the value of this training.

The program provides an opportunity for hospitals who have taken the AHA #123 Equity Pledge to Act to Eliminate Healthcare Disparities to meet the requirement for training staff in cultural competence.

Please note: this is a two-session program, participants must attend both sessions.

Continuing education credits will be awarded.

OSHA Recordkeeping Seminar
Monday, January 11, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
[View Brochure | Event Registration]

Is your OSHA LOG accurate? Should you record the following injuries on your 2015 Log: Medical Glue is applied to close multiple lacerations? X-rays are taken of a leg after a fall, but the results are negative? Employee is given a non-prescription pain medication at prescription strength? The injury occurred in December 2014, but the employee didn’t return to full duty until March 2015? To learn more about the most recent changes and updates, please join Leona May, Compliance Assistance Specialist with Federal OSHA in Bridgeport, for a detailed overview of OSHA Recordkeeping. Bring your log and your questions!

Patient Family Engagement Conference: Communicating Clearly Across the Continuum
Wednesday, January 20, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
[View Brochure | Event Registration]

Our next Patient Family Engagement Conference will focus on access to information. On Wednesday January 20, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. we will discuss patient portals, portable medical records, and the current laws and regulations that govern patient access to information in the morning. The afternoon will focus on Patient Engagement with the Choosing Wisely collaborative.

The program is being presented as part of the Partnership for Patients HEN 2.0 educational series.

2016 Joint Commission Standards and National Patient Safety Goals Update
Thursday, January 21, 2016
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
[View Brochure | Event Registration]

National expert Diana Scott, Sr. Director, Vizient, will join us to present CHA’s annual full-day program outlining The Joint Commission’s new standards and national patient safety goals for 2016 and challenges from 2015 with strategies for compliance. Ms. Scott will also review survey process changes, patient safety alerts and tips, and CMS focus areas, as well as best practices for a successful survey.

CHA is also pleased to have Mark Crafton, Executive Director of Communications and External Relations at The Joint Commission (TJC), and Ann Scott Blouin, Executive Vice President of Customer Relations at TJC, join us for the program. Their presentations will cover the CMS-required survey process changes, significant developments in hospital options for the submission of core measure data to TJC, compliance data on challenging accreditation standards in Connecticut hospitals, and several of TJC’s newer programs and services—including TJC’s Center on High Reliability.