Hartford Hospital Cancer Program

2005 Annual Report

community outreach
MOBILE MAMMOGRAPHY “Take the Time” is Hartford Hospital’s mobile mammography program. New state-of-the-art mammography equipment can now be transported to community organizations to provide screening mammograms for women who would not have access otherwise. Mobile mammography has long been the dream of the Hartford Hospital’s Cancer Program, the Permanent Commission on the Status of Hartford Women, the American Cancer Society, Hartford Hospital physicians, and others who know that this life-saving service must be brought into the community to aid women in need. The mobile unit can be brought into almost any site so mammograms can be provided right in your community. Each screening takes approximately 15 minutes, and is an important service that can be offered to promote early detection of breast cancer.

Left, “Take the Time” Mobile Mammography van at inaugural cancer education/screening event held at First Cathedral Wellness Fair in Bloomfield. Those pictured include: (left to right) Kathy Travers and Melissa Planzanauro, mammography techs; Pam Benoit, Mobile Mammography Community Liaison; Gerry Cyr, Radiation Therapy; Edris Strong, Radiology; Roxanne Rotondaro, Coordinator Partnership for Breast Care; Heather Gilligan, Radiology Technologist; and Edward Cronin, MD, Partnership for Breast Care Medical Director.

Right, Pamela Benoit, Mobile Mammography Community Liaison, speaks with young women about breast cancer awareness education at a community session.
IT IS OUR PLEASURE TO WELCOME YOU to our “2005-2006” Cancer Program Annual Report which highlights the many facets of our Cancer Program activities at Hartford Hospital. These activities cut across virtually every department and component of the medical staff, and we are truly fortunate to work collaboratively with so many to bring comprehensive and coordinated care to our patients and families.

This year’s report highlights our efforts in reaching communities. The public we serve needs awareness information about cancer as well as about prevention and screening strategies to help minimize the burden of the disease. Unfortunately, minority populations and people of color have a higher mortality rate from the disease, in part due to access issues and in part due to barriers to receiving screening and treatment services.

We are particularly pleased to focus on our Mobile Mammography program, just initiated this year. Women of color have a 1.3 times higher mortality rate from breast cancer in Hartford. In pilot programs which we have conducted, access to mammography in a convenient, trusted, and comfortable environment leads to greater utilization of this potentially life-saving technique. Through the generosity of many wonderful donors, we are able to bring mobile mammography to community organizations, health centers, senior centers, businesses, and elsewhere in hopes of reaching women who might otherwise not have this test performed. Collaboration between the Partnership for Breast Care, the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, Hartford Hospital’s Department of Imaging, and Jefferson X-Ray Group will bring this service, along with computer aided diagnostic second readings of the mammograms for women in our community.

Hartford Hospital is most fortunate to have a superb multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary team of medical specialists, nurses, social workers, dietitians, physicists, engineers, counselors, pastoral care staff, and others who devote time and effort to collaboratively develop individually tailored treatment and support plans for our patients and families. These individuals also give of themselves by serving on committees, tumor boards, and conferences so that we can provide the best system of care for our patients and continually educate our trainees and ourselves.

During this year, we received a three-year full accreditation by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer in the teaching hospital division. Highlighting this honor is the presence of many commendations from the American College of Surgeons for the programmatic excellence of our Cancer Program. Our Cancer Registry, founded in 1928, one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the United States, continues to maintain an excellent record of acquiring and analyzing data which is heavily utilized by our researchers.

Research is an important part of our mission, and we continue to be active in prevention research, clinical trials treatment research, cancer communication research, and cancer quality of life research. Our collaborative relationship with Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCare continues to offer Connecticut patients’ unique cutting-edge trials otherwise unavailable in our state. Education of patients, families, the public, and health care professionals is also an important component of our mission.
I decided to participate in the program just as an interesting activity. It turned out to be so much more...almost a holy experience. I don't think it would have been the same had the other people not been cancer survivors.

Prostate cancer survivor, 73

BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER AND CDC EARLY DETECTION

The State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health (DPH)'s Connecticut Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (CBCCEDP) and Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN) programs at Hartford Hospital seek to screen uninsured and underinsured women in the state of Connecticut. Hartford Hospital has been a pioneer in the state of Connecticut by agreeing to this partnership with DPH since 1995. The program represents a collaboration of the Cancer Center and Women’s Health.

The program offers free mammograms, Pap tests, clinical breast exams and cholesterol and glucose screening for those women who qualify. Women with abnormal results are followed up with diagnostic services. If women are diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer, they may be enrolled in Medicaid to cover their cancer treatment.

When the abnormal results relate to cholesterol and/or glucose, the program offers intervention workshops to learn about nutrition and exercise. These sessions show women techniques to improve their diet, substitute unhealthy ingredients with healthy ones and provide strategies and materials to start an exercise program. These well-received workshops are critical in reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases, and enable those women affected to live longer, healthier, and more active lives.
Boutique

Now in our third year, the Boutique continues to feature items that help cancer patients feel better, more self-confident and ready for recovery. Looking to expand our clients’ choices for mastectomy products, the Boutique added a fourth line in 2005. With that addition came the introduction of our first pink bra, a trend that carried throughout the industry, paying homage to breast cancer awareness, and giving the ladies another attractive option. We also carry sports bras and bathing suits for mastectomy patients, which allow them to continue on with their fitness routines after treatment for breast cancer. This year we provided over 100 clients prostheses and bras, over 130 with wigs and over 1,100 scarves and other head coverings too numerous to mention. At the recommendation of the Center’s dietician, we also added a high-caloric, powdered drink mix for patients who, for various reasons, have difficulty maintaining their weight. The availability of this item in the Boutique has made a big difference in convenience for many clients who otherwise had only two other resources in Connecticut to obtain this product. We have been told it is this type of attention to our patients’ needs that make the Boutique a unique resource for our patients. During the year the Boutique also participated in community outreach events. Our presence at these events with breast prostheses, surgical bras and related items, as well as product and informational brochures, allows the public to ask questions they don’t ask in other venues. Besides being educational for the public, these events give the Boutique invaluable exposure. Following such events, it is not uncommon for the Boutique to receive phone calls from people saying, “I saw you at ___”, or “my friend was at ___ and told me about the Boutique. Can you help me?” Of course we can, and this is the reason we exist! The Boutique continues to offer Gray Cancer Center Patients and families access to a wide variety of products in a pleasant, convenient environment.

Lorraine Casanelli, RN
Boutique Coordinator

Susan Wright, MBA
Cancer Program

Cancer Clinical Research Office

The Cancer Clinical Research Office (CCRO), an active participant in a variety of national cooperative group research studies and several industry-supported trials, oversees one of the largest cancer research offices in Connecticut. The hospital’s affiliation with Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCare has provided the CCRO with the opportunity to open additional cancer clinical trials. The CCRO supports multiple protocols sponsored by the Cancer and Leukemia Group B (CALGB), the Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG), and the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NSABP). The NSABP “STAR” trial, which compares tamoxifen versus raloxifene as breast cancer chemoprotectants in high-risk postmenopausal women has completed enrollment of participants this year. Results of the STAR trial are planned for release in 2006. A new NSABP breast cancer prevention trial is due to be released in 2006. Dr. Patricia DeFusco is the principal investigator for the NSABP treatment and prevention trials. Hartford Hospital is the anchor institution with nine participating satellite institutions throughout the state of Connecticut. The SCOPE grant has been renewed and supports the salary for an outreach educator, Cecilia Kozlowski, who is responsible for education and recruitment of minority men and women for prevention trials.

The GOG trials have continued to recruit gynecology patients under the guidance of the principal investigator, Dr. Stacy Nerenstone and RN Coordinator, Camille Servodidio. Dr. Joel Sorosky has recently arrived as the GYN oncologist for Hartford Hospital and has initiated and succeeded in applying for full provisional GOG main institution membership. GOG # 199, a GOG prevention trial for women who are at increased genetic risk of ovarian cancer because either they or a close relative has a genetic mutation (BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene) for ovarian cancer or they have a strong family history of breast and/or ovarian cancer has opened. Women may choose between surgery to remove their ovaries or may be followed with blood testing (CA-125) and annual transvaginal ultrasound. Hartford Hospital is one of the top recruiting sites for this trial.

A new Dana-Farber trial for metastatic breast cancer compares a novel epothilone drug, BMS-247550, (a new IV chemotherapy drug) plus capecitabine (a pill form of chemotherapy) versus capecitabine alone in women who have been previously treated with or are resistant to an
anthracycline and are taxane resistant. A CALGB trial compares Cytoxan and Adriamycin chemotherapy versus Taxol in women with node negative breast cancer. A promising CALGB trial for Chronic Lymphoid Leukemia, lead by Dr. W. Jeffrey Baker, includes IV chemotherapy fludarabine plus rituximab followed by an injection of alemtuzamab. Dr. Siegel is the principal investigator and Rhea DeBari, RN is the lead research nurse for Dana-Farber and CALGB trials. The SMART trial completed enrollment and compared gadolinium, an intravenous drug, plus whole brain radiation to whole brain radiation alone in patients with metastatic brain tumors. Dr. Alexandra Flowers and Edith Clark, RN spearheaded this project.

Hartford Hospital has recently been approved as an affiliate site for RTOG, Radiation Therapy Oncology Group. Dr. Kenneth Leopold is the principal investigator for the RTOG trials.

Finally, the best “treatment” for cancer is to either prevent it or detect it early. Since 1995, the CCRO has been involved in the Connecticut Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (CBCCEDP), a state sponsored outreach program that provides mammograms and cervical cancer screening to the underserved and underinsured women of the greater Hartford area. A total of thirty-six cancers have been detected. These outreach efforts are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and organized by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health. Dr. Merwood Jones serves as medical director. The CCRO continues in its fifth year with the CDC funded WISEWOMAN grant, and interventions have included a nutrition and exercise educational series, individual and group classes, as well as weekly summer time walks in Bushnell Park. In 2004, one of the national representatives from the CDC/WISEWOMAN visited one of Hartford Hospital’s WISEWOMAN interventions. Maria Palomares and Maria Rodriguez-Furlow manage the CDC/WISEWOMAN programs.

These are intriguing times in cancer research and treatment. The CCRO remains committed to our patients and families through education, screening, and clinical trials.

Camille Servodidio, RN, MPH, CRNO, OCN, CCRP
RN Coordinator

Robert Siegel, MD
Medical Director

Cancer Nursing

Healthcare organizations around the world are using the Magnet Standards to assess and improve their processes for achieving quality in nursing and in patient outcomes. The characteristics that define nursing services at Hartford Hospital, a Magnet Hospital, include an environment that emphasizes high quality patient care, clinical autonomy and responsibility, participatory decision making, strong nurse leaders, two-way communication with staff, community involvement, opportunity and encouragement for professional development, effective use of staff and resources, and high levels of job satisfaction.

Nurses who work in the Cancer Program are specially trained Oncology nurses and many have obtained an Oncology Certification in Nursing (OCN). Cancer Nursing continues to offer the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) approved Chemotherapy and Biotherapy course twice per year. Hartford Hospital nurses who are ONS trainers teach this course to community nurses throughout Connecticut. Kathy D. Burns, RN, MSN, OCN, past president of the Central Connecticut Chapter of the Oncology Nursing Society and Mary Kate Eanniello, RN, OCN, are two of three active ONS radiation course trainers in all of New England who teach a one day ONS Radiation Oncology Nursing Course twice per year. Additionally, our nurses are leaders in the local and national professional oncology nursing organizations. Camille Servodidio, RN, MPH, OCN is a member of the ONS News Editorial Board and a reviewer for the Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing. The Cancer Program supports and encourages nursing staff to attend the Annual ONS Congress, which offers extensive education and networking opportunities. Kathy D. Burns, RN, MSN, OCN, manager of Radiation Oncology Nursing, presented to the 2005 Oncology Nursing Society’s Institute of Learning in Nashville, Tennessee. She presents this course both nationally and at Hartford Hospital.

Celeste Yanni, RN, Michelle Nai, RN and Diane Shenstone, RN, Case Coordinator, attended the Annual National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) in Atlanta, GA in April of 2005. Celeste Yanni, RN, Nurse Educator in Oncology presented the study “Basic Nursing Knowledge about Palliative Care” at the Capitol Area Alliance for Research. Celeste Yanni also developed the first class for Palliative Care resource nurses. Many of our nurses attended the first Palliative Care Conference at Hartford Hospital – they were: Anona Weaver, RN, Angie Falcon,
LPN, Patricia Rathmann, RN, OCN, Mary Kate Eanniello, RN, OCN, Carolyn Meuse, RN, Maryann Steed, RN, OCN, and Donna Gomme, RN. Celeste Yanni, RN also served as a panel facilitator at the Connecticut Council for Hospice and Palliative Care on Symptom Management in Palliative Care.

Recognition and development of clinical expertise for nurses at the bedside ensures quality patient care and fosters staff retention. Nursing Clinical Leadership at the bedside is evidenced through the continuing development of the Clinical Leader role at Hartford Hospital. Cancer nursing clinical leaders include Bobbie Lane, RN, Anne Hart, RN, Nancy Discenza, RN, Maryann Steed, RN, Darcie Shewokis, RN, Tammy Ratcliffe, RN. Two nurses who recently received certification are Darcie Shewokis, RN, OCN, and Lisa Rizoli-Book, RN, OCN. Sally Lundberg, RN, OCN, Donna Gomme, RN, Michelle Nai, RN and Pam Ehlers, RN are our Geriatric Resource Nurse specialists. Kathleen Hunter, RN, the Oncology Unit’s skin care resource, participated in the Annual Prevalence and Incident Survey, which is reported in the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators.

Staff receives numerous accolades from patients and peers. The inpatient oncology unit received the highest patient satisfaction score in the hospital in one quarter. Patients and families often mention the names of our staff in satisfaction surveys, thank you cards and donations to the Palliative Care Fund. During Oncology Nurse Week staff were selected by their peers for recognition awards: Patricia Rathmann, RN, OCN, Kathy Burns, RN, OCN, Terri Corbo, RN, Sally Lundberg, RN, OCN, Shelley Goralski, LPN, Darcie Shewokis, Clinical Leader, RN, OCN, Debbie Plourd, RN, OCN, Edie Clark, RN, OCN, Pam Ehlers, RN, Kelly Zercie, RN, Alice Lavery, RN, Misty Gawron-Foss, RN, Deidre Giobbe, RN, Ana Dos Santos, PSA, Robert Juall, PAA and Susan Peck, AA. Sally Lundberg, RN, OCN was also chosen as one of fifteen nurses from Hartford Hospital to receive a prestigious Nightingale Award for Excellence in Nursing. Rhea DeBari RN, and Mary Kate Eanniello, RN, OCN received the Linda Richards-June Long Awards for excellence in patient care. Two Patient Care Associates, Diane Jones and Claire Williamson received the Dedicated to Caring Award for their exceptional contributions to the health care team, patients, and peers. Kathy Burns, RN, MSN, OCN and Camille Servodidio, RN, MPH, CRNO, OCN, CCRP, applied and were accepted for a prestigious Oncology Nursing Society 2005 Leadership Development Institute scholarship.

Both Hartford Hospital inpatient and outpatient medical oncology units provide dedicated state-of-the-art cancer care. The health team approach provides comfort and caring treatment, for both the patient and their family. Our team includes physicians, nurses, social workers, care coordinators, dietitians, chaplains, volunteers, pain control and rehabilitation services. Patient education is also an important component of cancer care. Patients, families and caregivers may utilize two education resource rooms, one in the inpatient unit, the Resource Learning Library. The second resource library is located in the Cancer Center. Both provide access to literature and books covering a wide-variety of cancer topics, as well as computers that may be used for Internet research.

Hartford Hospital’s outpatient cancer unit continues to provide patient centered care utilizing a multidisciplinary team approach for the multitude of patients seen and treated. Hematology-Oncology, as it is often called, provides chemotherapy as well as a vast array of hematological and intravenous treatments for cancer and non-cancer patient populations. Over the past year Hematology-Oncology has seen a growth in patients treated as many Hartford Hospital physicians are now utilizing our services to care for a vast array of outpatients.

Cancer Nursing exemplifies the commitment to all magnet standards, especially the dedication to education, prevention, and support to the community we serve. Community outreach activities are numerous within the program and staff passionately participate and volunteer their time to these efforts. Employees dedicate their time to programs such as Celebrate Life, the Remembrance Service, Team Towanda, Hispanic Health Council and many more.

For eight years Hartford Hospital and the Cancer Program respectfully offered to the community a unique service, our Palliative Care Program. Located on the fourth floor of the Conklin Building this program represented a fairly unusual concept among hospitals nationwide. Fulfilling this mission in the current health care environment became a challenge. Recently, after careful assessment of resources, the pressure of sustaining our current configuration of beds, and the need to position the hospital for the future, decisions were made regarding the re-location of several patient care units. Among these changes was the consolidation of those Palliative Care beds with Oncology beds.
The CHESS Program was first introduced to Hartford Hospital in 1996; since that time we have provided this service to over 840 women with breast cancer and 370 men with prostate cancer. CHESS users have been able to share support with others, gather reliable, easy-to-understand information, and use a wide variety of tools to help with coping and decision-making. CHESS users can also link to other reliable cancer information web sites, get information about caregiving and healthy relationships and read the latest in cancer news. As a member of the CHESS Health Education Consortium (CHEC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, we at Hartford Hospital seek to advance the impact of computer-based technology on health education, decision-making, behavior change and patient support. The CHESS Research Consortium brings together university health service researchers and sponsors known for excellence and innovation in health promotion and health care delivery.

The following three research projects have acquired staff and begun enrollment. We expect the results of these three studies to contribute valuable information about ways to use the Internet and other communication tools to improve the quality of life for all cancer patients.

1) Centers of Excellence in Cancer Communication: Mentor Integration Project. This is a National Cancer Institute grant, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin. In this research project we will study the effects of interactive cancer communication systems by testing how a human cancer mentor combined with the CHESS program affects patients experiences. This study's population is women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer within the last two months. Recruitment to this randomized study began in April of 2005.
Cancer on the Ropes  In the summer of 2005, the Cancer Program piloted a new program for cancer survivors called Cancer on the Ropes. These outdoor experiential workshops were developed and led by cancer survivor Louise Feldman and her husband Mark to enhance patient quality of life. The program provides fun-filled workshops that help cancer survivors at various levels of treatment and recovery improve the way they see themselves and their disease. Those living with cancer face countless challenges, such as damaged self-image, loss of independence, and underlying fear. They need help to live with energy and optimism regardless of their prognosis.

The program is built on the principles of the more rigorous Outward Bound program. Participants are challenged to move beyond barriers that stand in the way of self-confidence, trust, and the ability to work through problems. The variety of activities in the program encourages participants to trust others as well as themselves, enables them to work effectively in teams, and teaches them that fear need not compromise their goals. Physical strength and conditioning are not needed, only a willingness to be a player. Participants are free to choose their comfort level when taking on any given challenge.
Hematology

The Hematology section of the Dept. of Medicine continues to provide a wide array of diagnostic and therapeutic services for disorders of the lymphatic and hematopoietic systems. It receives approximately 250 referrals yearly for patients with various leukemias, lymphomas, plasma cell dyscrasias, along with a large number of those with cytopenias, and bleeding and clotting disorders. Newer diagnostic services include JAK-2 gene detection in myeloproliferative disorders; various lymphoma and myeloma mutation analyses; anti-heparin antibody measurements; activated factor 10 analysis for low-molecular weight heparin dosing; more precise measurements of titers of bcr-abl gene mutations in chronic myelogenous leukemia. Advances in the treatment of these ailments remain exciting and include:

1. Gleevec for CML, which has for some, replaced stem cell transplantation as a treatment choice, and has at least doubled the life expectancy.
2. Rituxan for B-cell lymphomas, both indolent and aggressive, and also for a whole panoply of immunologic syndromes, like anti-factor 8 antibody acquired hemophilia, TTP, ITP, autoimmune anemias.
3. Newer protocols for myeloma, which include thalidomide and velcade, prior to transplantation.
5. Novel approaches to the myelodysplastic syndromes with Vidaza, and soon, with Revlimid.

Appropriate patients are now referred to outside transplant centers, mainly at Yale, and the Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCenter in Boston for definitive high-dose therapy against recurrent, or resistant hematologic malignancies.

The Hematology section provides a two to three month rotation for post-graduate fellows from the University of Connecticut, who are thus integrated into the inpatient and office practices, seeing and evaluating new consults as they are referred. A residency elective is shared with the Oncology section. Members plan and attend weekly and monthly conferences, and grand rounds. This year’s topics included outpatient management of thromboembolism, and newer approaches to myelo-dysplasias.

Stephen Firshein, MD
Division Chief, Hematology
Medical Oncology

The Division of Medical Oncology plays a pivotal role in coordinating patient care, clinical research, and medical education at Hartford Hospital. As the general US population continues to age, the number of new cancer cases is projected to increase by 50% over the next 20 years. Hartford Hospital remains committed to providing state-of-the-art treatments to participation in multi-institutional clinical trials through the Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG), through the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NSABP), and the Cancer and Leukemia Group B (CALGB).

The Division of Medical Oncology has expanded for the sixth consecutive year. There are now 12 board certified Medical Oncologists, 1 Advanced Practice Oncology Nurse Practitioner, as well as support staff of more than 35 oncology nurses, secretaries, and laboratory technicians. Our division has a young, vibrant membership with the physician age distribution being 34-55. Although all members of the division see a wide spectrum of cancers, several members do have particular areas of expertise. Dr. Stacy Nerenstone has worked closely with Dr. Joel Sorosky coordinating treatment of patients with a wide range of gynecologic malignancies. Dr. Robert Siegel collaborates with the physicians at the Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCenter and treats many patients with soft tissue sarcomas, malignant melanomas, and many other rare malignancies. Dr. Jeffrey Kamradt has had research expertise in genitourinary oncology with particular interest in treating advanced prostate cancer. Dr. Timothy Hong’s research while at Duke University Medical center concentrated on gastrointestinal malignancies. Drs. Schauer, DeFusco, Menon, and Baker have worked closely with Dr. Elizabeth Brady, Surgical Department, and the Partnership for Breast Care, and have made the weekly Breast Cancer Pre-Treatment Conference a very successful teaching conference. The inpatient Medical Oncology unit was re-located from Conklin Building to Bliss 5 East in October 2005.

The results of clinical research studies continue to improve the outcome for many cancer patients. Dr. Robert Siegel is the Chairman of Hartford Hospital’s Institutional Review Committee and is the Medical Director of the Cancer Clinical Research Office.

The division is committed to providing medical education to medical students, interns, resident physicians, and medical oncology fellows. Multidisciplinary educational patient care conferences are held in conjunction with the Departments of Surgery, Urology, Neurology, Thoracic Surgery, Gynecology, Pathology, and Radiation Therapy. In addition, Hartford Hospital’s weekly Breast Cancer Pre-Treatment Conference remains under the direction of Dr. Elizabeth Brady from the Department of Surgery.

On the national level, there has been considerable interest and attention drawn to positive studies showing a significant improvement in survival in patients with early stage lung cancer treated with adjuvant chemotherapy following surgical resection of their tumors. As our patient population continues to increase each year, we anticipate expanding our division in order to provide state-of-the-art cancer care in Hartford and the surrounding communities. Outpatient treatments are currently provided at the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center as well as at satellite facilities in Avon, Windham, Southington and Wethersfield.

This is an exciting time in the evolution of medical oncology as a specialty. Many less toxic, more targeted therapies are now available for patient with a wide range of tumors. Clinical studies that are currently in progress should become available for many of the more common solid tumors within the next several years. We are very optimistic that the results of basic research will give far more options for our patients.

Peter K. Schauer, MD, FACP
Division Chief, Medical Oncology
Nutrition Services

The Hartford Hospital Cancer Program recognizes the importance of collaborative cancer care and provides close interaction of the dietitian with patients, families, nursing staff, medical staff, and social workers. Weekly attendance and participation in head and neck rounds, breast cancer rounds and tumor board help to foster better understanding of the latest procedures and possible nutritional interventions necessary. Presenting at our support programs (breast, ovarian, and prostate) provides an additional venue to reach our patients with the nutritional information they desire. The Dietitian spoke at three very successful community outreach Lunch & Learn programs at Limra, Traveler’s and Wethersfield Senior Center.

New Beginnings, our collaborative program for women after breast cancer treatment, was held 6 times this year. This program provided participants with certified instruction in nutrition, exercise, yoga, and Tai Chi. Due to the increasing demand to include all women recovering from cancer and cancer treatment, the program expanded its’ enrollment successfully.

Education for professionals was achieved by mentoring 5 University of Connecticut dietetic interns during their cancer clinical rotation. Guest lecturing at the School of Allied Health at the University of Connecticut and the University of New Haven helped stimulate potential interest in the area of cancer and the role of nutrition. The Cancer Center Dietitian taught the nutrition section for the Hartford Hospital School of Allied Health Radiation Therapy Technology Program and was an instructor for the Registry Review for new graduates of Radiation Therapy programs across the country.

The annual programs of Celebrate Life and Remembrance Service were very successful and the dietitian had an active role in both these events.

The Resource Library in our Cancer Center Atrium was renovated and materials were updated. The dietitian actively worked on this committee.

Ann Zogbaum, MS, RD
Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center

Oncology Social Work Services

The overall goal of the oncology social work team is to minimize the negative impact of cancer by offering supportive services as outlined in the Cancer Program’s mission statement. Our oncology social workers continue to provide psychosocial interventions with cancer patients and their families that include emotional support, advocacy, resource referrals, education, and guidance.

In addition to the Cancer Program inpatient and outpatient direct service caseload, our oncology social work team strives to meet the needs of patients through public outreach. Created in response to feedback from patients and their families, our oncology social workers have planned another educational and support series for next year. This series will focus on concrete topics such as financial guidance, social security disability, home care options, advance directives and insurance. Other topics will include coping with fatigue and helping families adjust to a parent’s cancer diagnosis.

In an effort to support the psychosocial needs of our patients, partnering with the American Cancer Society, the oncology social work team facilitates monthly “Look Good Feel Better” workshops. Additionally, our oncology social workers facilitate the Bliss 5E Patient and Family Resource Room Committee and Hartford Hospital’s Brain Tumor Support Group. Other programs in which our social work team has been involved include Celebrate Life, the annual Remembrance Service, and the Cancer Program’s Bereavement Committee. The oncology social workers also participate in the Cancer Program’s Psychosocial Task Force, inpatient and outpatient rounds, The Cancer Committee, The Cancer Program Advisory Committee and CORE Meeting. Through attendance at various seminars and conferences throughout the year, our oncology social workers take advantage of continuous learning opportunities of value to the population served by the Cancer Program. Finally, our Oncology Social Workers also collaborate with other mental health practitioners in the community as well as state and private agencies for the purpose of coordinating resources and strengthening the Cancer Program.

Charmain Ali, LCSW and Hillary Keller, LCSW
Oncology Clinical Social Work Team
MD OUTREACH Each year Hartford Hospital physicians and staff conduct 4 to 6 free cancer screening and awareness events in association with local organizations. Over this past year, we have participated in such events in collaboration with the Hispanic Health Council, Community Health Services, the First Cathedral, The West Indian Foundation, the African American Parade, and Lift Every Voice and Sing. At these events, we deliver information concerning lung cancer awareness and prevention, colorectal awareness and early detection, and provide clinical breast exams and breast cancer awareness, mammography sign-up and prostate cancer awareness and free screening with digital rectal exams and PSA blood tests. In addition to Hartford Hospital staff that volunteer to work at these events, physicians volunteer their time to conduct screenings, give lectures, and answer questions. We have been fortunate to have involvement by physicians from the Department of Urology, Radiation Oncology, Medicine, Surgery, and Medical Oncology, amongst others that participate in our efforts. In addition, Hartford Hospital physicians deliver educational talks concerning breast cancer, prostate cancer, lung cancer, colon cancer, and general cancer awareness throughout the community over the course of the year, on a volunteer basis.

Two medical oncologists, (left) Stacy Nerenstone, MD, and (below) Patricia DeFusco, MD, delivered cancer awareness education programs in the Hartford Hospital community.
Palliative Care

For over 9 years, the Cancer Program, in collaboration with Hartford Hospital, have developed Palliative services on a designated Palliative Medical Unit. This unit was established with a vision to provide dignified care and preserve the integrity of any individual at the end of their life. To this end, we have delivered this kind of care to hundreds of patient's and their families, and as a consequence of this mission, we have had the opportunity to share and educate other areas of Hartford Hospital who have seen a need to provide ongoing Palliative care. Palliative principles have become an integral part of an employee’s orientation, and staff developed competencies in palliative medicine and end of life care.

Providing Palliative medicine along the continuum of care is seen as a priority as evidenced by reducing symptoms and establishing goals of care as soon as possible in a patient’s hospital stay. As part of the continuum, a Hospice initiative was established to provide better end of life care. With the help from various community Hospice organizations, a process was established to assist patient’s and their families in finding the best agency to meet their needs whether at Hartford Hospital, a community agency or at home.

Our relationship with the Hartford Hospital Volunteer office and VNA Healthcare Volunteer services continues to grow. The established educational program, based on the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s volunteer training standards, has been a great success and has provided value to both patient’s and the volunteer’s themselves.

Our effort to advance Palliative medicine practices and preserve its mission has been accomplished. Now we are looking forward to new and exciting opportunities. As Hartford Hospital continues to grow and expand, we will start 2006 with a combined Palliative Medicine Unit and an Oncology Unit. This new unit, Bliss 5 East, will provide private rooms to all patients and renovations are currently underway to provide a family lounge, meditation room, small kitchenette and comprehensive resource room.

Often, success is measured by personal relationships. We look forward to continued collaboration within Hartford Hospital and with the community we serve.

Evan Fox, MD
Medical Director, Palliative Medicine Unit
Psycho-Oncologist, Division of Consultative Psychiatry
Department of Psychiatry

Partnership for Breast Care

The Partnership for Breast Care (PBC) has seen referrals and projects grow dramatically in our fourth year. The Partnership provided one-on-one support and guidance to over 1,000 people in the ’05 fiscal year. More than 200 people attended community education sessions. The weekly Pretreatment and Provider Educational conference continues this year as does the regular PBC educational ad series in the Life newspapers.

Many exciting projects which the Partnership has been involved in the past year were completed and offer more resources for people with breast cancer. The Partnership published a novella, “Alone Together”. A brochure, “Taking Care of Your Emotions After a Breast Cancer Diagnosis”, was developed. The partnership produced a video of women who have had reconstruction, talking about the personal side of breast reconstruction and developed a peer-to-peer support matching program for those considering reconstruction to talk with those who have had reconstruction. Additionally, the PBC acquired a video from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons about the clinical issues in reconstruction and several copies of “Show Me”, a book that has pictures and stories of many breast surgery outcomes. These resources are available at physician offices through the PBC. This reconstruction project was made possible by a generous grant from the Hartford Hospital Auxiliary.

The Partnership, in collaboration with the Cancer Program, Department of Radiology at Hartford Hospital and Jefferson X-Ray, introduced the Hospital’s new Mobile Mammography program, “Take the Time”, in October 2005. The Partnership provides coordination, community outreach and general oversight of the mobile mammography program. We are proud of have received a Susan G. Komen grant which allowed us to have a part-time “community liaison” position for the mobile mammography program.

The partnership continues to expand relationships with physician groups and is pleased to have the following groups as “affiliated practitioners”: Connecticut Multispecialty Group, ProHealth Physicians, Women’s Health Connecticut, and Hartford Medical Group.

Roxanne P. Rotondaro, MPH
Coordinator

Edward Cronin, MD
Medical Director
Pastoral Services

Confronted with a health crisis such as cancer, individuals come face-to-face with realities that prompt them to step back from their lives and reflect on the meaning and implications of the illness. Their perspectives on these uncertainties emerge in large measure from their religious, spiritual or philosophical orientation. These attitudes and beliefs influence how they experience the illness—its meaning, how they feel about it and how well they come to terms with it. A religious or spiritual footing can help them as they grapple with these issues and seek to keep their bearing through the mental and emotional turmoil that comes with challenging cancer.

Of course, spirituality and religion are very personal decisions. In addressing a patient’s spiritual needs during cancer care, staff members at Hartford Hospital are compelled to take their lead from the wishes of the patient. Chaplains from the hospital’s Pastoral Services Department are always there to listen, empathize and provide comfort. Each patient is accepted just as they are, and the chaplaincy staff constantly seeks to understand the depth of each person’s belief in God or a Higher Power.

Father James Ibekwe and Chaplains Loren McGrail and Ed Kramer currently attend to the pastoral/spiritual needs of cancer patients and caregivers throughout the hospital. They are joined by the entire staff of hospital chaplains in providing round-the-clock care, extending compassion, hope and a healing presence to people and their families during the diagnosis and treatment of cancer. In addition, the Pastoral Services Department goes beyond the walls of the hospital setting to address the spiritual, educational, and practical needs of the greater Hartford community.

Edward Kramer, Chaplain
Pastoral Services Department

Psycho-Oncology

The Psycho-Oncology support service at the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center and the Hartford Hospital Oncology unit provides ongoing supportive, complementary care for the many patient’s and families. The integrative approach emphasizes improving quality of life, appreciating the intimate relationship between disease process and the existential nature of illness, and providing care with dignity, integrity and compassion. We have a dedicated service that includes Social Services, Nutritional consultation, Pastoral support and many in the Nursing Department who lead support groups on a monthly basis.

Currently, we have 8 support groups and seminars which include: Brain Tumor Support, Look Good/ Feel Better, New Beginnings, Prostate Cancer Support and Advanced Prostate Cancer Support Groups, Prostate Cancer Support Group for Woman, Woman with Cancer, Bereavement and a new program called, “Man to Man” which provides patient facilitated one-on-one support. In addition, “The Next Step,” Cancer on Ropes which provides a one-day support seminar which focuses on: finding your strength, developing a sense of hope, increasing the patient’s role in healing, changing the way we all view cancer.

Other involvement this year include:

• The Partnership for Breast Care program has created a phone triage service and a referral service that helps provide more support and diagnosis at the time of need.
• Continued inpatient and outpatient consultation with the Dept. of Psychosomatic Medicine, which consulted with 187 people with the diagnosis of cancer.
• Collaboration with the Palliative Medicine unit and Palliative Medicine Consult Service providing ongoing Consultation Psychiatry.

Evan Fox, MD
Medical Director, Palliative Care Unit
Psycho-Oncologist
Consultation/Liaison Psychiatry-Division of Psychosomatic Medicine
Quality of Life Research

An ever-present goal during a patient and family journey through a cancer diagnosis and treatment is to minimize adverse effects from the cancer and its treatment and maximize patient’s function and quality of life. This important focus had generated significant interest in developing research studies to further understand all of the domains which impact quality of life. We have embraced this type of research, both by looking at quality of life issues in many of our standard cancer clinical treatment trials, but also by conducting specific targeted studies focusing on quality of life itself.

Our CHESS studies underway focus on how we might best support patients and families, both at the time of initial cancer diagnosis, as well as during an experience of advanced disease. These studies, in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin, help us to understand how we can marry technology and human support to help both cancer patients and their caregivers.

A second kind of quality of life research has focused on factors which impact on psychological, spiritual, and emotional domains of cancer survivors. In collaboration with researchers from the department of Family Studies and Psychology at the University of Connecticut – Storrs, we are studying on how both older and younger patients have coped with their cancer experience. Through a Lance Armstrong Foundation grant, these studies allow us to gain greater insight into the experience of many of our cancer survivors. It is hoped that these types of studies will result in information, which will allow us to develop strategies for better supporting patients and families during and after treatment.

Andrew L. Salner, MD, FACR
Director, Cancer Program

Radiation Oncology

Hartford Hospital’s Radiation Oncology department provides comprehensive services for our cancer patients in collaboration with other members of the patient’s treatment team. Services offered include:

- Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy
- Image-Guided Radiation Therapy utilizing ultrasound and fiducial markers
- 3-Dimensional Conformal Radiation Therapy
- Low-Dose Rate Brachytherapy for prostate cancer, gynecologic cancers, head and neck cancer, sarcoma, and other sites
- High-Dose Rate Brachytherapy for breast cancer, prostate cancer, sarcoma, lung cancer, esophageal cancer, and other sites.
- Systemic Radioisotopes in the management of bony metastatic disease and lymphoma

A multidisciplinary team including physicists, dosimetrists, engineers, radiation therapists, nurses, social workers, dietitians, data management staff, clerical staff work with Radiation Oncology physicians to develop an optimal individually tailored treatment plan for each patient. This team meets regularly and has active programs in quality improvement, peer review, new patient management, and patient satisfaction.

We have increased a number of offerings for patients with prostate cancer through the development of our High-Dose Rate Brachytherapy program. This “temporary” seed implant program serves as an alternative to permanent seed implants in selected patients whose glands are too large for seed implantation or for whom seed implantation is not appropriate. Temporary High-Dose Rate Brachytherapy seed implant includes the operative placement of afterloading catheters into the prostate through the perineal template, the utilization of CT Imaging to develop an optimized treatment plan, and two 15-30 minute treatment applications utilizing a high activity iridium 192 seed which dwells in the catheters to deliver a homogeneous dose to the target area. Patients remain in the hospital for two days for this treatment, which is generally followed by five weeks of external irradiation to the prostate and surrounding tissues.

Radiation Oncologists participate in a wide array of cancer conferences at Hartford Hospital and surrounding institu-
tions designed to optimize prospective patient management, collaboration amongst specialists, advancement in multidisciplinary care, enhancement of clinical research, and education of medical staff, house staff, and students. Radiation Oncologists actively participate in the teaching programs of Hartford Hospital’s School for Radiation Therapy Technology. Radiation Oncologists also participate in the hospital’s community outreach efforts designed to advance awareness of and screening for cancer in the underserved population of our community.

Many cancer therapies involve the concomitant or sequential use of multiple modalities, including chemotherapy, surgery, biological therapies, and radiation therapy. We work with our oncology colleagues on designing individually tailored treatment plans for our patients. We also focus on providing appropriate support and rehabilitation services, as well.

The Radiation Oncology Department continues to enjoy very high patient satisfaction ratings and is a preferred site of therapy for patients with cancer in our region. As a leader in cancer care delivery, we continue to be proud of our advanced technology, superb staff, and contributions we make as a member of the cancer care delivery team.

Andrew L. Salner, MD, FACR
Medical Director

Robert E. Rice, MS, DABR, FAAPM
Department Head & Chief Medical Physicist

School of Allied Health Radiation Therapy Program

The Radiation Therapy Program sponsored by Hartford Hospital is a 24-month certificate program, which gives students the skills necessary to apply for national certification and become Radiation Therapists. These individuals provide care and quality radiation treatments to patients under the direction of the radiation oncologist.

This program, accredited by the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technologists, began in 1989 with a generous grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Since its inception numerous students have graduated providing exceptional care to cancer patients throughout Connecticut. Students enrolled in the program gain valuable clinical experience at many sites statewide. This additional experience helps to prepare students for an evolving career as a radiation therapist. As one of 90 programs in the country, we have 100% certification pass rate in which the scores are in the top third in the country.

There are many people who contribute to the success of the program, including two full time faculty members and one part time faculty member. Many people from the Radiation Oncology Department are involved with teaching both clinical and didactic such as the radiation therapists, dosimetrists, physicists, physicians, nurses and dietitian. The many people who teach and share their expertise enhance the quality of the student’s education. The success of the program is evaluated annually during an advisory committee meeting where program outcomes are reviewed.

Part of the program’s mission is to provide the profession and community with trained, qualified therapists who are sensitive and compassionate to patient needs. With this end in mind, students are encouraged to participate in the many community events sponsored by the cancer program. Often, the program faculty go into the community to educate high school and college students on the career as a radiation therapist including what is cancer, describe cancer treatments speak of risk factors and preventive care.

Hartford Hospital program officials organize and host the New England Society of Radiation Therapists Registry Review. This annual event reviews the contents for students preparing for their certification exam. This year 251 students came nation wide representing 28 different states and over a third of the programs.

The collaboration and dedication of the department of education, program staff and Radiation Oncology department make it possible for us to provide excellent training for students which leads to exceptional care for the patients.

Nora Uricchio, M.Ed, RT (R)(T), Program Director
Radiation Therapy Program Hartford Hospital
Cancer Committee Report

The Cancer Committee is a multi-disciplinary committee designed to foster the care of cancer patients at Hartford Hospital. It is responsible for assuring that the hospital meets all applicable national standards for cancer patient care as established by the American College of Surgeons (ACOS). The Committee members review all cancer program activities at the hospital, perform quality checks of registry data, and participate in the development and review of patient care evaluation studies.

This year, the entire Cancer Program at Hartford Hospital underwent a comprehensive evaluation by the accreditation arm of the American College of Surgeons. As a result of this thorough review process, the Hartford Hospital Cancer Program was awarded the maximum three-year full accreditation with special commendations for superior performance.

In 2005 the Cancer Committee initiated a review of cancer clinical protocols run by our physician medical staff. The hope is to better coordinate the activities to maximize clinical trial options for our cancer patients and support for the hospital’s clinical research efforts.

As the entire medical world moves closer toward implementation of the electronic health record, the Cancer Committee is coordinating efforts between the tumor registry and the medical records department to convert our cancer staging process to the digital format. This should result in more accurate and timely data capture. The goal of this process is, ultimately, to facilitate analysis of the outcomes our cancer treatment efforts and improve overall cancer patient care.

Vincent Laudone, MD
Cancer Committee Chairperson

ACOS Liaison Physician Report

The Cancer Liaison Program was developed to serve as a local network of physician representatives for the American College of Surgeons (ACOS). They provide direction for establishing, supporting and maintaining standards as an ACOS accredited Cancer Program. The liaison physician at Hartford Hospital also serves as Connecticut State Chair for the ACOS and attends annual meetings both at the state level and at the Commission on Cancer (CoC) national meetings held in April and October.

During the calendar year 2005, Hartford Hospital received an unconditional 3-year approval with commendation from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons. Hartford Hospital is one of the few hospitals in the country that received unconditional approval with commendation.

The ACOS liaison at Hartford Hospital chaired the weekly Department of Surgery Tumor Board, presenting a wide variety of prospective case discussions with multidisciplinary attendance. The liaison is member of the Cancer Committee and the Advisory Committee, providing updates on ACOS changes and participating in the annual physician review of Registry data. The liaison physician at Hartford Hospital is a member of the Board of Directors for the Cancer Control Plan for the State of Connecticut.

In accordance with CoC approval standards, the liaison and Cancer Committee monitor the Hartford Hospital cancer conferences. CoC benchmarking data was utilized for national comparisons in our annual report. Hartford Hospital cancer registry data was released through the Facility Information Profile System (FIPS) to the American Cancer Society (ACS) as a level II submission. This provides information to the public on services and resources available to them at our hospital.

Robert J. Piorkowski, MD, FACS
ACOS Liaison Physician
State Chairperson

Cancer Registry Report

The Hartford Hospital Cancer Registry houses more than 80,000 cancer cases treated at Hartford Hospital since 1928. Each year, more than 2,500 cases are added to the database. Data is submitted electronically to the CT Tumor Registry to meet state mandates for reporting diagnoses of cancer and to the National Cancer Data Base to meet American College of Surgeons (ACOS) Commission on Cancer requirements.

Three Certified Tumor Registrars (CTR), a case finder, a follow up specialist and an administrative assistant actively participated in a very successful visit from the ACOS.

During the accreditation process, Registry data is reviewed for timeliness of data collection, accuracy and participation by CTRs in educational opportunities. The requirements for these two standards resulted in commendation. The Registry team is to be applauded for their superior effort in maintaining the high standards set by the ACOS and State of CT.

Deborah J. Jacques, MSM, CTR
Cancer Registry Manager
The Imaging Center

The Imaging Center at Hartford Hospital is comprised of 38 Board Certified attending Radiologists and two full-time specialized Physician Assistants. The staff encompasses specialty training and expertise in all aspects of diagnostic imaging and intervention. The Department’s Diagnostic Radiology Residency Program remains fully accredited by the RRC and ACGME, and is currently training 19 Radiology residents.

We continue to provide the most comprehensive imaging and intervention services in the region with an ever-growing role in the diagnosis, care and management of patients with cancer. We have introduced the latest in integrated digital imaging solutions in conjunction with the newest developments in cross sectional imaging. Highlights include the acquisition of a 64-slice Multi-Detector CT scanner and the development of a 3-D post-processing lab in the Imaging Center. These advancements have provided the most sophisticated tools for early detection and display of neoplasms. PET/CT applications continue to play a central role in tumor diagnosis and management with a continuing growth in approved indications.

MRI division introduced PROSE prostate spectroscopy and is now the only hospital in CT with this ability to look at the chemical “fingerprint” of prostate cancer in addition to obtaining high-resolution anatomic evaluation.

The Division of Interventional Radiology has expanded its services with growth in pain management and tumor therapies. The demand for chemoembolization therapies for patients with inoperable tumors has continued to grow. Dr. John Foster, in conjunction with Dr. Andrew Salner, hopes to begin to offer radioactive microsphere embolization at Hartford Hospital in 2006. Cryoablation of liver, kidney and lung lesions in patients with contraindications to surgical resection are being performed with in greater numbers and with excellent results.

The Department continues to participate in all multi-disciplinary conferences throughout the institution with representation on the various Cancer Committees where we bring our extensive imaging and intervention expertise to assist in the care of this patient population.

The Imaging Center remains committed to bringing the finest, most advanced technologies into the hands of the brightest clinicians to support the provision of the most advanced cancer care available in the region.

Gynecologic Oncology

Physicians from the Division of Gynecologic Oncology traditionally collaborate with medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, pathologists, and other cancer specialists in planning and providing comprehensive care for patients with gynecologic cancer and their families. Our division continues to offer patients the opportunity to participate in clinical trials offered by the Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG), the only National Cancer Institute (NCI) funded cooperative group dedicated exclusively to the study and treatment of women with gynecologic cancers.

In previous years we were affiliated with Tufts University in Boston. Due to increased accruals, this year Hartford Hospital, New Britain General Hospital, and John Dempsey Hospital became a parent institution. This affords our patients the opportunity to participate in studies previously available only at great geographic distances from their homes and families. Camille Servodidio RN, Cancer Clinical Research Office, coordinated patient care among the physicians involved with this project. This research project truly reflects the team effort involved in cancer research at Hartford Hospital.

During 2005, John L. Currie, MD, JD joined us as the Director of the Division. Dr. Currie has enormous experience in clinical care and research in gynecologic cancers. He was a resident at the University of Pennsylvania and a fellow in Gynecologic Oncology at Duke University. He was on the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill before he became the Director of Gynecologic Oncology at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Currie was the Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Dartmouth University.

The success of our division at Hartford Hospital is due to the close collaboration among a variety of dedicated cancer researchers. We have a gynecologic oncology tumor board that meets twice monthly. The departments of medical oncology, radiation oncology, and pathology regularly attend this clinical, research, and educational session to provide extremely well coordinated patient care.

John L. Currie, MD, JD
Joel I. Sorosky, MD
Doreen A. Bowtruczyk, RN
Gynecologic Oncology
Hereditary Cancer Program

The family history should not be overlooked when planning the treatment and management of a patient with cancer. Medical genetics is an important part of the Cancer Program team. Approximately 5-10% of all breast, ovarian and colon cancer is hereditary. Significant hereditary characteristics include cancer under the age of 50; bilateral cancers or multiple primaries in the same individual; associated cancers such as breast and ovarian, or colon and uterine cancer; and multiple affected family members in multiple generations. Ethnic background may be important as well. Individuals in the Ashkenazi Jewish population, for example, have a somewhat higher chance of hereditary breast and ovarian cancer. Both the maternal and paternal family histories are relevant.

Genetic counseling with the Hereditary Cancer Program is available to those persons with cancer and/or other extended family members. The consultation consists of reviewing a detailed family history, discussing the principles of hereditary cancer, and an individual risk assessment for a hereditary cancer syndrome. Patients considering testing receive information regarding the risks, benefits, and limitations of genetic analysis. Participation in available research protocols is also encouraged.

Hartford Hospital’s collaborative approach is a critical component of our success. We have been particularly excited to work with the Cancer Clinical Research Office and the Ovarian Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Study (sponsored by the National Cancer Institute). The weekly Pretreatment Breast Conference provides a forum for education as well as discussion of complex management issues. We also have DNA banking program that allows patients to store their DNA for possible future testing. The Hereditary Cancer Program of the Division of Human Genetics, University of Connecticut Health Center, has been serving the patients, physicians, nurses and other health professionals of the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center since 1992.

Jennifer Stroop, MS
Certified Genetic Counselor

Robin Schwartz, MS
Certified Genetic Counselor

Robert Greenstein, MD
Director of Hereditary Cancer Program of the Division of Human Genetics

Integrative Medicine

Integrative medicine continues to be involved with Oncology patients using all our modalities for their continuing comport. These services include:

- Art
- Acupuncture
- Guided Imagery
- Massage
- Reiki
- Peggy Huddleston’s Prepare for Surgery, Heal Faster Book and Relaxation Tape/CD

Some of the benefits of Integrative Medicine are:

- Relaxation and stress reduction
- Reduction of pain and muscle tension
- Decrease in fatigue
- Reduction of nausea and other chemotherapy and radiation symptoms
- Accelerated wound healing
- A greater sense of well-being

Some of our patient comments from this year include:

“The combination of Acupuncture, Massage, and Reiki enabled me to get through the 16 weeks of chemotherapy feeling physically stronger and in brighter spirits. It also reduced the sickening feeling of chemotherapy.”

“I was very fortunate to have Reiki the three days I was on N8 for surgery. I know I healed 10 times faster than I did from the same surgery last year. Combining Reiki with a positive attitude and imagery made all the difference in the world.”

“Reiki was very soothing and supportive in conjunction in my medical treatment. It helped me think more clearly when making such critical decisions about treatment.”

Of note this past year, Japanese Public TV recently highlighted Integrative and cancer care, interviewing patients and staff regarding acupuncture, massage, and expressive art. For the first time this year, our new Expressive Art interns and volunteers have worked alongside our Artist in Residence to assist patients in using art as a vehicle for self-discovery and healing. Patients who have participated in this program receive a great deal of valuable insight and meaning from the process. Integrative Medicine continues to provide gift certificates for massage, acupuncture, reflexology, therapeutic touch and reiki for patients, employees, their families and friends.

Marcia Rothwell
Director of Integrative Medicine, Department of Medicine
Celebrate Life

This program, organized by the Cancer Program, is held annually the second Sunday in June to celebrate cancer survivor’s month. Now in its 15th year, this celebration of life has grown in popularity – over 1,000 attendees - such that it outgrew available space on the Hartford Hospital campus and is now held indoors in a spacious, air-conditioned facility at the Learning Corridor. It is one of the largest cancer survivor celebrations in the Northeast.

Emily F. Fritts Symposium

The Cancer Program organizes this yearly symposium with the guiding principle being to offer a program that will enrich the lives of cancer patients. The family of Emily Fritts generously established this fund in her memory. Emily loved gardening, and the first annual program was held at the Hartford Hilton Hotel on May 4, 2005. The program, entitled, “Your Cancer Journey: Seeds for Renewal.” Featured two motivational speakers: Georgia Shaffer, who is a cancer survivor, author and professional speaker; whose talk focused on life after loss. The second speaker was Daniel Chong-Jimenez, executive chef at the Spa at Norwich Inn.

Breast Community Education and Outreach

Hartford Hospital Cancer Program and the Partnership for Breast Care have expanded the community education, collaborative activities, and events that are related to breast cancer awareness and education. Educational sessions have been offered throughout the Greater Hartford Area on such topics as Ductal Carcinoma In Situ by Dr. Robert Siegel; Women at High Risk for Breast Cancer by Dr. Patricia DeFusco; A Woman’s Life Question and Answer Panel including panelists Dr. Edward Cronin and Dr. Stacy Nerenstone. September through May each year, the Partnership for Breast Care prints a monthly educational article focusing on a breast health or cancer topic. Each year Hartford Hospital has a team for the annual fundraising walks for Komen, American Cancer Society, and the Connecticut Breast Health Initiative. Breast cancer screenings are offered at community health fairs such as Hispanic Health Fair.
WOMEN’S LIFE A Woman’s Life is a comprehensive, integrated approach to a woman’s health care. Upon diagnosis of cancer or any other medical condition, a woman is introduced to a system that recognizes that she may have other issues beside her primary diagnosis. A group of health care professionals meet on a monthly basis at Hartford Hospital to determine the best ways to get health information to women before or after she is part of the system. Through many community outreach programs throughout the year women are offered health information, screenings and opportunities to access the finest system of healthcare for women.
Neurological Oncology

Neuro Oncology provides comprehensive services to patients with tumors of the brain and for cancer patients with neurological symptoms. Patients with primary brain tumors receive comprehensive care and treatment from a multidisciplinary brain tumor management team comprised of physicians from Neurosurgery, Radiation Oncology, Medical Oncology and Neuro Oncology, and Social Workers to help with their complex needs. Patients with systemic cancer are assisted with pain management, and diagnosis and treatment of different neurological problems related to cancer and its management. Additional help with coping is provided by our Brain Tumor Support Group.

Our neurosurgeons use state-of-the-art technology, with computer-assisted navigation system (Brain Lab) to precisely define the tumor and minimize the damage to the normal brain during surgery. The Radiation Therapy department offers innovative techniques, such as IMRT and radio surgery for treatment of primary and metastatic brain tumors.

Dr. Alexandra Flowers, one of only two trained Neuro Oncologists in Connecticut sees over 100 patients with primary brain tumors per year, and also patients with metastatic disease. She has set up new treatment protocols for patients with newly diagnosed and recurrent malignant gliomas and for patients with brain metastases from systemic cancer. Dr. Flowers is board certified in Neurology, with Neuro Oncology training at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Alexandra Flowers, MD
Neuro Oncology

Pain Management/Anesthesia

The Anesthesia Pain Service consults each year on a number of oncology patients with difficult pain problems. The role of the service has primarily been one of caring for patients who have required implantable delivery systems to provide analgesics directly to the neuraxis (into the spinal canal or epidural space). These patients have failed to achieve adequate analgesia or may suffer unacceptable side effects from simpler pain control regimens. Patients, whose pain is inadequately controlled with oral narcotics, can be cared for at home with visiting nurse assistance even though a narcotic or local anesthetic is being continually delivered into the spinal canal. The Anesthesia Pain Service and the home health care agency maintain contact with the patient and monitor the effectiveness of the implanted delivery system so that the patient can be as independent as possible.

Palliative care plays a critical role whenever a patient needs more services than can be provided at home. State of Connecticut regulations covering the scope of nursing practice preclude caring for patients with spinal or epidural catheters in a nursing home. The palliative care unit is then a valuable resource for these patients with pain and other needs. It is hoped that regulatory changes can be made to allow for more flexibility in placement of patients with spinal delivery systems.

Other interventional procedures include neurolytic blocks (involving permanent destruction of a nerve) such as a celiac plexus block, and a variety of simpler techniques (such as epidural steroid injections) that are used commonly in patients with benign chronic pain. The Anesthesia Pain Service is always available as a resource when its services are needed, and during the past year has added two experienced pain practitioners to further enhance our service.

Jeffrey Morrow, MD
Anesthesia Pain Service

Pain Management/Pharmacy

The Pharmacy Pain Control Service at Hartford Hospital has been very busy this past year. We saw 1,257 patients for pain relief or symptom control such as nausea and vomiting (up from 1,124 patients the previous year). The majority of these patients were inpatients. However, we also saw outpatients in the Gray Cancer Center.

During this past year we also provided in-service education to physician and mid-level practitioner staff during Noon Conferences, and to nurses from many different areas of the hospital and community. We have had medical students and medical residents from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine rounding on the service. Members of the Pain Management Service have lectured to various cancer support groups at Hartford Hospital (prostate cancer, brain tumor). The Pain Management Service is a separate but integral part of the newly formed Palliative Medicine Service. Our goal this year is to continue training more of the pharmacist staff as Pain Management Consultants.

Richard Gannon, Pharm. D.
Department of Pharmacy Services
Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

The Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine is composed of 16 Board Certified Pathologists and 3 Ph.D. Laboratory Scientists, many of whom received their training at major cancer centers including Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and M.D. Anderson Hospital. The department continues to have an active training program based at Hartford Hospital with a total of 21 residents and fellows. The Department supports the Cancer Program by co-sponsoring three weekly Tumor Boards (general oncology, breast oncology, and pediatric oncology) and bi-weekly urologic and gynecologic oncology conferences.

Members of the Department participate in a variety of national cancer study groups including the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast Project (NSABP), the Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG), and the Children’s Oncology Group. During the past year members of the department have authored over 30 papers in refereed journals, including 12 papers on various aspects of cancer.

The Molecular Pathology Laboratory continues to evaluate new markers to expand our ability to give more precise tumor diagnoses and provide data to help in therapeutic decision-making. A pilot project to evaluate DNA microsatellite instability in colon cancers was completed this year and we expect to be offering this evaluation in the near future.

The Department has a long and rich tradition of excellence and leadership. Its members have traditionally been and continue to be recognized locally, regionally, and nationally for their expertise.

Mark E. Ludwig, MD
Section Director, Anatomic Pathology

Surgical Oncology

The Partnership for Breast Care and the Brownstone Clinic continue to meet the needs of the Greater Hartford community providing state-of-the-art, multidisciplinary, patient-centered care for patients with breast disease and breast cancer. The breast surgeons within the Department of Surgery regularly enroll patients in the clinical trials; thereby offering cutting-edge, therapeutic options for patients with breast cancer. These surgeons also coordinate clinical trials and consults with Radiation and Medical Oncology.

The number of minimally-invasive breast biopsies have increased steadily over the past years. These procedures include core needle biopsies, mammatome biopsies and stereotactic or ultrasound-guided biopsies. Mammatome biopsies ensure a large enough specimen using a vacuum technique. Non-palpable breast lesions or biopsies using either computerized mammographic guidance (this is the stereotactic biopsy) are also ultrasound-guided. Visual-guided, excisional biopsies continue to comprise the early stratagem in the diagnosis and management of breast cancer. The advantage of early diagnosis utilizing invasive and minimally invasive approaches is that patients with benign findings are spared surgery and that patients with cancer can expeditiously undergo definitive surgery.

Hartford Hospital’s surgeons are among only a few in the state trained in the placement of the MammoSite balloon catheter, the newest technology allowing for partial breast irradiation. A select group of women with invasive breast cancer who consider breast conservation treatment with lumpectomy can undergo radiation to the lumpectomy site in a week with twice daily radiation treatments. The balloon is placed in the operating room into the lumpectomy cavity and is removed in the radiation therapy department immediately following the final treatment.

The use of sentinel node biopsies for identification and evaluation of axillary node involvement in breast cancer continues to be standard treatment at Hartford Hospital. Hartford Hospital is one of the few hospitals in Connecticut that has the technology to biopsy early breast lesions detected on MRI (magnetic resonance imaging). An ultrasound machine has been added to the Brownstone
Breast Clinic, which now provides ultrasound-guided biopsies and sonographic evaluation of complex breast masses.

Jefferson X-Ray introduced the first all digital mammography practice in the region. In addition, there has continued to be unprecedented levels of collaboration and communication among clinical breast specialists, breast radiologists and breast pathologists.

This past year Hartford Hospital received an unconditional 3-year approval with commendation from the Commission on Cancer of the American College of Surgeons. As required by the Commission on Cancer, the hospital continues to provide an excellent and well-attended Tumor Board. Here representatives from the departments of surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, pathology and radiology meet weekly to discuss both challenging and interesting oncology cases. This continues to be an excellent venue where attendings can present difficult clinical cases of sarcomas, melanomas, head and neck tumors, breast cancers, and other malignancies where multidisciplinary pre-treatment decisions can be made.

This year has seen the increased use of laparoscopic techniques for the surgical treatment of colorectal cancers. Colonic intraluminal stents have been introduced to relieve obstructing cancers for palliation without surgery. In addition, multiple genetic colorectal cancer syndromes have been recognized and a familial colorectal cancer registry is being initiated.

The department of surgery continues to offer a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of liver tumors. Working in conjunction with medical oncology and interventional radiology, minimally invasive liver resections are being performed with excellent results. Cryoablation and radiofrequency ablation using a newly up-graded state-of-the-art ultrasound technology has been instituted.

While most malignant tumors of the stomach need to be approached with the conventional surgical techniques, laparoscopic approaches to benign gastric tumors have increased over the past year with decreased length of stay and minimal morbidity.

The department of surgery continues to provide cutting edge treatment as well as an excellent multidisciplinary approach for the treatment of the cancer patient today. In the past year, the department of surgery has taken an active role in the newly initiated palliative care team to help both the cancer patient and families cope with both the social and end-of-life issues.

Dr. Orlando Kirton, Chief of Surgery, participated in the second annual World Without Limits Wellness Fair at the First Cathedral Church in Bloomfield, Connecticut on October 22, 2005. He participated on a panel of experts where he spoke on cancer screening and prevention of breast, colon and rectum, lung and prostate cancers. He also participated in the prostate screening program.

**Statistical Information**

The Hartford Hospital Diagnostic Breast Center and Jefferson X-Ray Group and Partnership for Breast Care performed 33,120 mammograms in 2004 of which 25,718 were screenings.

New cases of breast cancer total 522 in the past year with 480 operative procedures performed. Forty-seven women underwent total mastectomy while 63 underwent modified-radical mastectomy. Sentinel lymph node mapping to avoid extensive axillary dissection is being used with increased success and new multi-modality techniques are achieving earlier diagnoses of breast cancer. This year 169 sentinel node biopsies were performed.

Hartford Hospital evaluated 229 new cases of cancers of the colon and rectum. Two hundred and six colorectal operations were performed during the calendar year. Minimally-invasive (laparoscopic-hand assisted) resectional techniques are practiced with increased frequency, and Hartford Hospital remains at the forefront with these minimally-invasive procedures to manage both benign and malignant disorders of the colon. The institution evaluated 16 new esophageal cancers and performed 2 operations for esophageal cancers — reflecting better staging techniques to limit operations on those who would not benefit from surgery. The number of esophageal resections decreased due to a more realistic approach to curability of these lesions and the use of stents and chemoradiation for palliative therapy. Forty-one new cases of gastric cancer were evaluated, of which 22 patients underwent surgical procedures. Ninety-three new cases of cancer of the
Team Towanda Foundation
Pink Ribbon Warrior.
Towanda was created by Team Towanda artist Gretchen Hedwood, who devised her persona as a cross between Wonder Woman and a Nordic warrior woman.

TEAM TOWANDA With a vision of “inspiring friends and ‘Pink-Ribbon Warriors’ to draw upon the power of friendship, laughter and kindness in the fight against breast cancer”, comes a group of committed, fun loving, energetic women who are unstoppable in meeting the mission of this foundation, Team Towanda. When Team Towanda and the Partnership for Breast Care at Hartford Hospital teamed up, they became “breast friends” and the community has experienced the most benefit. Team Towanda has provided a fund for mammograms and breast ultrasounds for women who do not have coverage for these services, purchased a breast ultrasound for the breast surgical clinic that provides care to underserved women, supported mobile mammography, and educated women on breast cancer early detection.
Head and neck region were operated on at Hartford Hospital, 48 of these were thyroid cancer, and 45 were cancers of the oral cavity and pharynx. A collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to the diagnoses of head and neck malignancies continues as this institution.

Hartford Hospital’s physicians saw 248 cases of lung cancer this past year, 81 of these cases underwent surgical resection. Again, more accurate staging of unresectable or incurable disease seems to have diminished both the number of referrals and number who undergo operations. Finally, 78 new cases of pancreatic cancer were evaluated in the past year; 29 underwent surgical resections.

MRI, CT, endo-luminal ultrasound, laparoscopy and other diagnostic modalities provide a better patient selection, eliminating those who in the past would have undergone surgical exploration but could not have had a resection-cure. In areas with adverse survival statistics; i.e., esophagus, pancreas, lung, and some gastrointestinal tumors, the overall number of operations may be decreased, the improved selection process gives more of the remaining a realistic hope of cure.

Orlando C. Kirton, MD, FACS, FCCM, FCCP
Director, Department of Surgery

Marilyn A. Folcik, RN, MPH, CPHQ
Assistant Director, Department of Surgery

Urologic Oncology

This year the Department of Urology at Hartford Hospital has established itself as the largest center for robotic cancer surgery in New England. More than 300 men have successfully undergone prostate cancer surgery with the “da Vinci Surgical Robot”. The robot’s exceeding fine and exceptionally precise movements are controlled by the surgeon via a three-dimensional, computer enhanced guidance system. The results with this state-of-the-art procedure continue to be very encouraging. Use of the device is now being expanded to patients with bladder cancer and to pediatric patients with congenital urologic abnormalities.

All members of the Department of Urology remain deeply involved in the care of prostate cancer patients. This year, the department of Urology, Radiation Oncology, and Medical Oncology, in collaboration with the hospital have established a Comprehensive Prostate Cancer Program. The purpose of this program is to facilitate and coordinate the care of prostate cancer patients at this institution. All aspects of prostate cancer care will be evaluated and coordinated via this program. This includes educational, diagnostic, therapeutic, investigational, and patient as well as family support issues. We are excited about this program and the enhanced level of care it will offer to our patients and their families.

Hartford Hospital remains the premier center for hand assisted laparoscopic kidney surgery with the world’s largest series of successfully treated patients. The technique has now been expanded to include more selective “renal sparing” surgery, which allows for the removal of cancerous tumors with maximum preservation of normal kidney tissue and function. For the first time ever, several new medical treatments for kidney cancer are now becoming available after many years of basic cancer research. Combining these new treatments with this less invasive renal sparing surgery is going to result in a dramatic improvement in the survival and the quality of life for all kidney cancer patients. Hartford Hospital and the Department of Urology are well positioned and fully committed to being a leader in this new exciting and hopeful paradigm.

Vincent Laudone, MD
Department of Urology
Community Outreach in 2005

The Cancer Program continues to be active in community cancer prevention and early detection efforts. Many other partners both inside and outside the Hospital collaborate in these efforts. We continue to be a leading site for the Center for Disease Control/State of Connecticut Department of Public Health Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. Thus far we have entered 1400 people into this program, including 149 in the past year. We have detected a total of 36 cancers (7 this past year) and have provided follow-up services for these women.

Our annual screening efforts this past year were held as part of community health fairs – Community Health Services fairs were held in July for West Indian screening; again in September during African American Parade week. We participated in the Hispanic Health Council Health Fair in August, and in October brought screening to the First Cathedral Wellness Fair, including the inaugural run of our new mobile mammography program, “Take the Time”, consisting of a van with a transportable mammogram unit. We were able to provide screening and awareness for breast cancer by providing mammograms, clinical breast examinations and training/information on breast self examination. We distributed colorectal test kits for at-home screening for colorectal cancers in women. Men were offered colorectal screenings during exams for prostate cancer detection. Over 30 blood specimens were collected and processed for PSA levels, another tool that is important for early detection of prostate cancer.

During June, the Cancer Center sponsored seven American Cancer Society Relay for Life events and participated in the annual Komen race for breast cancer awareness.

The Mary Mulready Sullivan Symposium is our major Cancer Program educational symposium for health care providers, offered in Spring each year. This past year our 16th annual symposium focused on prostate cancer, and featured distinguished speaker from Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCare, and our own Joseph Wagner, Hartford Hospital Urologist, spoke on Robotic Radical Prostatectomy. Dr. Wagner also showed a video demonstrating flexibility of the daVinci® robot system.

The Hartford Hospital Cancer Program sponsored a booth at the Buick Open PGA golf tournament. This information table was staffed with volunteers from the Cancer Program prostate cancer support groups, who distributed literature about the importance of prostate cancer detection. Live radio broadcasts were held from the booth.

The Cancer Program participated in the Lincoln Futures Golf Tournament, “Chip in for the Cure” in July at Gillette Ridge Golf Course in Bloomfield. The Cancer Program and Partnership for Breast Care also participated in the health component of the Women’s Fair sponsored by Hartford Hospital at the new Connecticut Convention Center. Breast cancer detection and awareness materials were distributed at both of these events.

The annual STAR dinner was held on November 6th for 167 participants at St. Clement’s Castle in Portland for all STAR participants and interested guests. The dinner featured UConn School of Medicine Dean Peter Deckers, MD. High-risk seminars are held quarterly in conjunction with the Partnership for Breast Health and the Cancer Clinical Research Office. Dr. Patricia DeFusco presents a timely topic during these meetings.

In conjunction with WRCH lite 100.5 radio station, Hartford Hospital again sponsored this year’s Night of Lite Laughter October 28th featuring comedian Bob Newhart. This event was held at the Bushnell and attracted a sell-out crowd of 2,500. Information about breast cancer prevention and early detection was distributed to those who attended this event. A special community symposium was held in Hartford to kick off breast cancer awareness month at The Hartford October 10th. This symposium, entitled “After Breast Cancer: Challenge and Transformation” featured Hester Hill Schnipper, LCSW, who discussed her own personal battle with cancer, as well as her experience as an Oncology Social Worker at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.
I decided to participate in the program just as an interesting activity. It turned out to be so much more...almost a holy experience. I don’t think it would have been the same had the other people not been cancer survivors.

Prostate cancer survivor, 73

Barbershop Program We and others in the United States have historically had difficulty reaching urban African American men with a message of prostate cancer awareness and the importance of screening and early detection. This shortcoming is dramatized by the fact that African American men have a 1.5 times higher incidence of prostate cancer than their Caucasian counterparts, and twice as high a mortality rate from the disease.

Working in conjunction with the organization ProstateNet and several major medical centers around the country, Hartford Hospital initiated participation in the program “Going to the Barbershop” two years ago. We are the only medical center in Connecticut to participate. Utilizing the belief that the Barbershop is a place where African American men receive credible lay health advice and can speak freely about their concerns, we trained 15 inner city barbers about basic prostate cancer issues, provided them with educational information for their clients, and also provided them with information concerning free screenings in the community. As a result of the success of this project, Dr. Andrew Salner was awarded a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant to grow this program in Hartford and extend it to Bridgeport and New Haven starting in October, 2005.
Brain Tumor Support Group

Our monthly Brain Tumor Support Group meetings are open to anyone who has been diagnosed with a brain tumor and their caregivers. The purpose of the group is to provide emotional support and resource information to people in the community who are dealing with the often-profound impact of a brain tumor diagnosis and treatment. A main theme for folks who come to our support group is social isolation. Meeting others in similar overwhelming circumstances and developing new connections creates a sense of belonging. As participants tell their stories, it becomes clear that they are not alone in their worries. Through mutual support, shared insight, and information exchange, participants often feel increased hope and an enriched quality of life as they face their unwelcome situation. Being part of this unique peer social network helps alleviate the tremendous strain of adjusting to a “new normal”.

Hillary Keller, LCSW

Breast Cancer Support Group

Every other month we combine our group with the Ovarian Cancer Support Group and open the evening up to all women with cancer. This year, we began with Kelly Taylor from our Health Sciences Library guiding the women in “A Work of Heart: Creating a Personal Journal for Self-Expression.” In March, Roxanne Stepnowski, Psy.D., answered the groups questions about “Dealing with the Fear of Recurrence.” One evening we created stamped cards and on another we learned about food choices for women with cancer from Ann Zogbaum, Cancer Program registered dietitian. In October we enjoyed a workshop presented by an image and color coach. And finally, Dr. Robert Greenstein M.D. explained genetics’ role in cancer treatment. We plan to continue our evenings of traditional support, alternating with programs of interest to all women with cancer.

Diane Ward RN, OCN
New Beginnings

New Beginnings is a 6-week program facilitated by the Cancer Program dietitian and designed to help women transition from cancer treatment to a healthy lifestyle. All participants have completed their treatment (except for hormone therapy). The women learn techniques to implement for healthy eating, exercise, Tai Chi, Yoga and journaling to incorporate into their daily or weekly routines. Each session is two hours in duration. The groups are purposely kept small (no more than 12) to provide a community environment where the women feel comfortable participating in all activities. Strong emphasis is placed on sharing, be it a healthy recipe or a technique to help others in the group regain normalcy in their life. The exercise, Yoga and Tai Chi are taught by certified instructors who emphasize listening to your body and adjusting activity to meet the individual’s physical needs. The classes have been held in the evening to accommodate the women’s schedules.

Ann Zogbaum, RD

Ovarian Cancer Support Group

The ovarian cancer support group is unique in its structure and history. It is the only group in Connecticut that is committed to education and support for women with ovarian cancer. The group focuses on meeting the diverse and challenging needs facing women with this diagnosis.

Over the past year, the monthly group has focused on issues related to coping with treatment, disease recurrence and options for clinical trials. At least three times a year, the group collaborates with other support groups to offer educational programs for all women with cancer. This enables women with all types of cancer to find support and strength through education and peer support.

The group attracts women from all over the state who come together to identify issues and concerns regarding prevention, early detection and comprehensive caring to women with an ovarian cancer diagnosis.

This past year, the group has been exceptionally active with 10-12 women attending per month. As a celebration of ovarian cancer awareness month in September, the Cancer Program sponsored a tea that was attended by group members at a local tea parlor.

Marcia Caruso-Bergman, RN, AOCN, APRN

Look Good, Feel Better

(With American Cancer Society)

Hartford Hospital Cancer Program, in collaboration with the American Cancer Society, sponsors a monthly Look Good, Feel Better program. This is a free service that teaches female cancer patients beauty techniques to help restore their appearance and self-image during chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

Volunteer cosmetologists lead small groups through practical, hands-on experience. Women learn about makeup techniques, skin care, nail care, and options related to hair loss such as wigs, turbans, and scarves. Each group program participant receives a free kit of cosmetics to use during and after the workshop.

This year the services of a Spanish speaking volunteer were added to aid communication of Spanish participants. This past year, over 50 women participated in this program.

Charmain Ali, LCSW

Marcia Caruso-Bergman, RN, AOCN, APRN
Prostate Cancer Support Group
This group, an affiliate of USTOO International, completed 14 years of education, problem solving and support to patients and families throughout New England.

Highlights this year:
• Harold Booker was appointed the USTOO Regional Representative for Connecticut.
• Tom Blank, Tom Decker and Harley Graime were selected to serve on the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program Consumer Peer Review Committee in Washington D.C. (never have 3 members from the same support group been chosen to serve in the same year)
• Volunteers staffed the Hartford Hospital prostate health awareness booth at the Buick Championship PGA Golf tournament, distributing pamphlets and discussing the importance of early detection with visitors. Infinity Broadcasting promoted our endeavors by broadcasting the WTIC-AM Ray Dunaway Show with Diane Smith and Scott Gray, and the WRCH-FM Allan Camp, Allison Demers, and Mike Stacy Show from the Prostate Health Awareness Booth.

This group is not all formal, for part of life is to enjoy the journey, with fun events such as the Reluctant Brotherhood Golf Tournament and group attendance at a Rock Cats baseball game honoring cancer survivors where Clem Hitchcock sang the National Anthem and Hal Booker threw out the 1st ball.

Due to dedicated members, we are a prototype for support groups throughout the USA. The group meets monthly for an informational session and break-out support sessions.

Margaret A. Garrison, APRN, BC
Support Group Coordinator

Advanced Prostate Cancer Support Group
The Advanced Prostate Cancer Support Group is a highly interactive round table discussion group meeting continuously the fourth Tuesday of every month since 1994. Members relate current treatment, consultations and clinical trials. In the process, close friendships have been formed. A luncheon group started by a member meets monthly.

Now in our 12th year, we celebrate the lives of members twice a year at a dinner party. Selected experts join us throughout the year. Visitors this year included Robert Siegel, MD, medical oncologist; Camille Servodidio, MPH, CRNO, OCN, Cancer Clinical Research Coordinator; George Higgins, Ph.D., clinical psychologist; and Bob Ellal, Chi Kung practitioner and cancer survivor.

This year our members started reviewing literature and tapes provided by the facilitator to report on at meetings. The information is then passed along to interested members.

Our members have formed strong bonds with one another and the Hartford Hospital community as they “Stay in the Game” - our motto.

Carol B.C. Fox, CURN
Support Group Coordinator

Spouse Prostate Cancer Support Group
Supporting the caregiver is the purpose of this group that meets for dinner every other month in the Cancer Center. Jointly facilitated by Margaret Garrison, APRN, and Carole Fox, CURN, women discuss coping with their partner’s cancer diagnosis, changes in the relationship, emotionally and physically, related to the enormity of a cancer diagnosis and the documented reticence of men to openly discuss health issues.

We strongly encourage women to take care of themselves throughout this difficult time in the life of their family. Mind and body stress reduction techniques are shared at each meeting as individual issues are discussed.

Carole B.C. Fox, CURN
Margaret A. Garrison, APRN
Support Group Coordinators
By listening to our patients we learn a great deal and that is what we do. Women considering breast reconstruction were telling us that they wanted the opportunity to speak with women who had undergone reconstruction, they wanted more resources in a variety of formats, and they wanted to know more about the personal issues related to breast reconstruction. This need has been met: a peer-to-peer volunteer role match women considering reconstruction with women who had reconstruction, and was developed in collaboration with the American Cancer Society Reach to Recovery Program. A resource book that includes photographs of the results of breast surgery including lumpectomies, mastectomies without reconstruction and with the various types of reconstruction was developed. Lastly, a video was produced by the Partnership for Breast Care featuring women who had breast reconstruction at Hartford Hospital. The women in the video candidly discuss the personal issues related to breast reconstruction, and a accompanying video by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons that provides clinical information. This project was funded by a generous grant from the Hartford Hospital Auxillary.
Throughout this report, it is clear that Hartford Hospital’s Cancer Program has an unwavering commitment to community service. Indeed, we recognize that excellence in care often begins long before a patient reaches the doors of the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, through efforts that encourage prevention and the early detection of cancer.

While gifts to Hartford Hospital for the Cancer Program make a difference in many important ways, they have a special impact in the community outreach services we provide. Many of the outreach services featured in this year’s report rely heavily on philanthropic support. Mobile mammography is one especially compelling example. Without gifts that were received to help fund its start-up costs, the “Take the Time” van simply would not be on the road.

Gifts to our cancer program also help make possible equipment purchases, programs and services that might not otherwise be possible. For example, gifts help support cancer prevention and treatment research, the breast and cervical cancer early detection program for underserved women, other kinds of outreach programs for patients, families, and the public, the acquisition of new technologies in Radiation Oncology, the unique CHESS program for patients newly diagnosed with breast and prostate cancer and, at the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, the acquisition of art and music, refreshments for patients and families, and books, audios, and on-line services for patients and families. The following funds help in making many of these programs possible.

**BREAST HEALTH OUTREACH AND EDUCATION FUND**
This fund supports the Hospital’s mobile mammography program, giving greater access to screening mammograms to those who might not otherwise have them.

**THE CANCER PATIENT & FAMILY ASSISTANCE FUND**
On a selected basis related to need, Cancer Program social workers will help identify needy patients and families for whom a limited financial gift to help with a life necessity such as a heating or electric bill may make a world of difference.

**CHESS FUND**
This fund helps make possible CHESS (Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System) for our patients.

**EDITH TAYLOR FUND**
This fund helps make possible amenities for patients and families at the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center.

**EMILY F. FRITTS MEMORIAL FUND**
This fund supports expenses related to presenting an annual “Emily Fritts Memorial Symposium.” The Cancer Program will organize this symposium with the guiding principle being to offer a program that will enrich the lives of patients.

**HELEN & HARRY GRAY CANCER CENTER FUND**
This fund makes possible many of the amenities for patients and families within the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center as well as many of our outreach programs for patients, families, and the public we serve. This fund is also utilized to help support breast cancer research and other types of cooperative group clinical research programs.

**HEUBLEIN FUND**
This fund helps make available access to educational opportunities for Cancer Program staff. This allows nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, physicians, and others to travel to meetings or educational opportunities, which will help to bring new skills to our patients here at Hartford Hospital.

**MARY MULREADY SULLIVAN ONCOLOGY FUND**
This fund helps make possible our annual Mary Mulready Sullivan Oncology Symposium, widely attended by nurses, physicians, and other healthcare providers from Connecticut and surrounding states.

**PALLIATIVE CARE INITIATIVE FUND**
This fund helps make possible our palliative care program activities, including acquisition of art and special amenities on Bliss 5, palliative care volunteer recruitment and development, community outreach and education related to palliative care.

**RADIATION THERAPY & ONCOLOGY FUND**
This fund helps make possible acquisition of equipment or communications instruments for our Cancer Center programs.

**REVEREND JAMES R. BLANNING FUND**
Through the funds donated in memory of Reverend Blanning, nursing staff have been able to attend educational programs related to Palliative Care and End-of-Life.

**WINKLER FUND**
This fund was established through a generous donation by the Winkler family for the education and development of oncology nurses. Nurses have been able to attend local and national Oncology Nursing Society conferences and other educational opportunities. This fund has also supported nurses obtaining oncology nurse certification.

We are fortunate that groups – groups of friends or colleagues, service clubs and others – often enjoy raising funds through events to benefit the Cancer Program and the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center. These groups find that they can have fun – while helping the community.
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ORGANIZE AN EVENT TO HELP THE CANCER PROGRAM AND THE HELEN & HARRY GRAY CANCER CENTER, PLEASE CONTACT KIM MARQUIS IN THE HOSPITAL’S FUND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AT (860) 545-2969, OR KMARQUIS@HARTHOSP.ORG.