The Nursing Professional Practice Model was developed by nurses from across Hartford Hospital. It is a visual representation of the scope of nursing practice and nursing's role in enhancing the human health experience.
When our patients think of nurses, more often than not they think of bedside manner, compassion and quality of care. What may not come to mind is the research and learning behind the scenes that puts our evidence-based practices to the test. Research helps in the discovery of new advancements and assists nurses to develop effective best practices, both of which promote and improve evidence-based care.

Right here at Hartford Hospital, nurses are propelling the field through examination, science and extensive study, all in the name of patient care. Their expertise and passion influences the core of the medical field and leads to improvements, innovation and better care for our patients.

In this turbulent and rapidly-changing healthcare landscape, it is imperative to reimagine a new vision with new strategies and capabilities, and the necessity for nursing innovation is at the forefront. Insights and inquiry by nurses has never been more important.

Research practices help advance our field and feed directly into everything goal we set to achieve in the future. Every accomplishment is a reflection of the expertise, knowledge and caliber of our outstanding nurses. With continued research, innovation and implementation, we will certainly meet and exceed our goals, bringing a quality of care that will benefit our patients, their families and our organization as a whole.

Cheryl Ficara, MS, RN, NEA-BC
Senior Vice President, Operations
Hartford Region,
Hartford HealthCare

Patient care and satisfaction depend on the knowledge, expertise and compassion that nurses exhibit every day. Our reputation for excellence is well known in the community and draws patients to Hartford Hospital seeking the best quality of care for themselves and family members. Behind that reputation there is an entire world of inquiry that is the basis of the incredible research that is happening every day at Hartford Hospital. It’s that spirit of inquiry that fuels change and innovation and at its root are the outstanding nurses in our organization.

In this issue, you’ll learn about the work of the Connecticut Nursing Research Alliance, co-chaired by Lisa Corbett, DNP, APRN, CWOCN and Donna Avanecean, APRN. Lisa summed it up best when she said, “Nurses ask the best questions.” I’m continually impressed by our nurses who are constantly asking questions and thinking about ways to make patient care even better.

It’s that spirit of inquiry that vaults our evidence-based practice. This issue is dedicated to highlighting the impressive work that is being done by the talented nurses within our region in support of clinical inquiry and innovation. From hospital-acquired infections to increasing COVID vaccinations for ambulatory patients with COPD, you’ll learn about some of those projects in this magazine. We’ll also introduce you to Hartford Hospital’s first Nursing Research Scientist Laura Dzurec, who supports and assists nurses on their journey to completing their research projects as well as Cheri Cronin, who in her new role as our Magnet Program Director will be capturing all of the great work of our teams as our “sources of evidence” that demonstrate nursing excellence.

There is so much to be proud of here at Hartford Hospital and I am honored to be a part of such an exceptional team of nursing professionals.

Laura J. Bailey, MSN, RN-C-OB
Vice President, Patient Care Services
Hartford Region,
Hartford HealthCare
With a copy of her Magnet application manual always close at hand, Cheri Cronin, MSN, RN has jumped right into her new role as Magnet Program Director at Hartford Hospital. Her work is cut out for her as the hospital gears up for designation as a Magnet hospital, recognized by the American Nurses Association. When it is achieved, Hartford Hospital will join the ranks of approximately 500 hospitals that hold that distinction. Currently, St. Vincent’s Medical Center is the only Hartford Healthcare hospital that holds the Magnet designation.

Magnet hospitals are appealing to both patients and nurses alike. Patients at Magnet hospitals know they are in good hands at an organization that supports, fosters and upholds an exceptional quality of care. Nurses are drawn to work at Magnet hospitals, which have a reputation for professional innovation, development and excellence in nursing.

Cronin’s robust background will serve her well in the pursuit of the designation. She earned her undergraduate degree in business management, later shifting gears to pursue a career in nursing. She has been at Hartford Hospital for 17 years. Most recently she served as the Manager of Patient Education for Women’s Health Services, working on both regional and system-wide initiatives.

The process of acquiring Magnet designation is a multi-year process and Cronin is quick to acknowledge that the groundwork has been laid quite adeptly at Hartford Hospital by the ones who came before her. It’s important to note that the hospital has been maintaining Magnet standards for many years. Nursing leadership has developed a nursing professional practice model with a steadfast attention to nursing excellence and development.

“This position is brand new, but it has been framed by the nurse leaders who came before me and kept their eyes on nursing excellence and never let the ball drop,” she remarks. “Gail Nelson MS, RN, NEA-BC has kept the organization on track with National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI) scores. She reports out on the data and keeps us in alignment by reporting out regularly.”

The Magnet model centers around five primary components which interact to exemplify expertise in nursing: Transformational Leadership, Structural Empowerment, Exemplary Professional Practice, New Knowledge, Innovations and Improvements and Empirical Outcomes. Enveloping them all is Global Issues in Nursing & Health Care.

When it comes to new knowledge, innovations and improvements, Cheri points to the outstanding work currently underway in nursing research. With the assistance of Hartford Hospital’s Nursing Research Scientist Dr. Laura Dzurec, nursing students are engaging in projects that will improve processes and delivery of care to patients.

“The Magnet application demands that we prove why, how and what we are doing to earn the distinction within the Magnet model,” shares Cronin. “We have to show supporting evidence that we are meeting all the Magnet standards of that model in the inpatient and ambulatory settings.”

The application process includes four years of data submissions, hospital history, plus background on the hospital’s nursing and shared governance models, which are already in place. Once earned, the hospital will maintain its designation for four years and be eligible to submit for re-designation when the time comes to a close.

Storytelling is an integral part of the application. Cronin knows that nurses at Hartford Hospital will shine as the stories of their innovation, knowledge and expertise are shared.

“We want to make sure that all the stories are told,” says Cronin. “Magnet will give us an opportunity to tell those stories, celebrate and learn from them.”

Cheri Cronin, MSN, RN

Hartford Hospital’s Magnet History

• Hartford Hospital was granted Magnet designation on January 12, 2004
• We were one of the first 100 hospitals to be designated in the U.S., and the second in Connecticut
• The hospital chose to withdraw its application for Magnet re-designation in February 2008 in order to place a concentrated effort on issues confronting us at the time
Nursing Research Scientist: Melding Practice Of Nursing With Research And Quality Improvement

Hartford Hospital’s first Nursing Research Scientist has been putting her several decades of knowledge and experience to work over the past year, playing a critical role in nursing research and quality improvement projects that can contribute to patient care excellence and processes within the hospital and beyond. Dr. Laura Dzurec assists and counsels nurses who are planning quality improvement or evidence-based practice projects or who are in the process of developing and completing their graduate nursing research projects. It’s a hands-on, collaborative effort with the purpose of amplifying and delivering impactful nurse knowledge, which in turn results in better patient care.

Laura Dzurec, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, ANEF, FAAN, has been in this role just over a year. It’s a new position, created in 2020 as a needed resource to support and enhance the culture of evidence-based nursing at Hartford Hospital. Nurse Director Maria Tackett, RN, EdD, CEN, TCRN, CCRN-k says Dr. Dzurec is integral to the advancement of nursing practice at Hartford Hospital and her efforts have a direct and positive impact on patient care.

“Dr. Dzurec supports staff in the application of research and quality improvement methods to improve care and patient outcomes at the bedside,” said Maria Tackett. “She teaches concepts of applied research for nursing staff and RNs in the Nurse Residency, as well as mentoring nurses in unit-based projects and graduate academic projects.”

Dr. Dzurec’s background is extensive, providing her with a robust and well-rounded knowledge of all aspects of nursing. Most recently she was a senior scholar at Boston College and has held faculty positions at institutions from Oregon to Maine, and places in between. Her clinical experience is vast and covers specialties from maternal and newborn nursing to medical/surgical to psychiatric nurse practitioner. All of these experiences have set her up for success as the hospital’s nursing research scientist, and that measure of success is in the nursing research projects that she helps bring to fruition.

With such a broad knowledge base and lifetime of real-world experience, Dzurec says it’s her unique way of looking at the world that makes her work click.

“I have always been a qualitative thinker in a quantitated world. I find that that has been beneficial, because I’ve looked at how everything fits together. That perspective helps me see the big picture and put things in perspective. It gives me knowledge to advise nurses about what to do from an evidence-based perspective.”

For Maria Tackett, the Nursing Research Scientist is instrumental in elevating nursing research, saying, “By making her expertise available to nurses at the bedside, this position is able to develop innovative approaches to care in order to improve outcomes. Dr. Dzurec supports nurses by reviewing methods and practices to assure that they have been derived scientifically and she helps them feel good about the work they are doing.”

We asked Dr. Dzurec, what makes a good research project?

“From start to finish, the project tells a good story. All details are laid out and answer these questions —
What did you come here for?
What are you going to measure?
How are you going to figure out whether or not there’s a change?
What are the implications?
And it’s all lined up.”

continued on page 4
Dr. Dzurec’s work is not limited to nursing project advisement. She also serves as a leader in the Hartford HealthCare (HHC) Nursing Research Council, an extension of her work to advance the development and implementation of research at Hartford Hospital and propel scientific inquiry to its greatest potential. The Nursing Research Council is the screening mechanism that helps nurses in the process of building out their academic or workplace-based projects. It is the first stop before Institutional Review Board review. A lot of Dzurec’s time is spent preparing for the meeting and getting nurses’ collateral ready for review.

At the core of nursing projects and studies is evidence-based practice, the application of current information and knowledge to caring, in support of strengthened patient outcomes. Dzurec says that’s where nursing needs to be, citing a wealth of research and projects that demonstrate clearly how nursing needs to be delivered.

When asked what excites her most about the job, Dr. Dzurec’s face lights up, saying, “I enjoy unearthing the great work that nurses are doing here, day in and day out. It is terrific to see that moment when nurses realize just how important their work is to the patients. I really believe in this role.”
Hartford HealthCare Nursing Council Ignites The Fire Of Inquiry

Within the Hartford Hospital Shared Governance Model lies the Hartford HealthCare Nursing Research Council. The council is a vibrant “think tank” of sorts, facilitating the process of evidence-based practice inquiry with the goals of improving high quality safe care, improved patient outcomes and decreased healthcare costs. The Council members mentor nurses to refine their practice questions, integrate the available evidence, test processes, generate new knowledge, evaluate findings and deliver results that change the course of patient care.

Lisa Corbett, DNP, APRN, CWOCN, and Donna Avanecean, DNP, FNAP-BC, CNRN, FNAP are co-chairs of the Nursing Research Council. They marvel at the inquisitive nature of nurses and their dedication to evidence-based practice.

“Front line nurses come to us with fabulous questions about their practice, and we help them shape those questions. We remove the barriers and provide the resources,” said Corbett. “The focus of the council is to facilitate the investigation of nurses’ questions as they pertain to evidence-based practice implementation, research or quality improvement.”

With an abundance of questions and concepts, the council exists to mentor and guide nurses in their approach to those questions, providing support and resources to help facilitate the process. The group meets formally monthly, reviewing research projects that are being worked on continually.

Avanecean and Corbett are joined by executive sponsors Nursing Scientist Dr. Laura Dzurec, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, ANEF, FAAN, and Professional Practice Nurse Director Maria Tackett, RN, EdD, CEN, TCRN, CCRN-k.

The meetings are of particular interest to nurses in graduate school, as the council can facilitate their requirement to conduct an evidence based practice change, or in the case of PhD students, to

Unit based Skin Champions Matthew LaBombard, BSN, RN and Amanda Salicki, BSN, RN, CCRN from C8I influence adoption of evidence-based technology innovation: “Scout” thermographic scanning to detect pre-visual skin changes in critical care.
Hartford HealthCare Nursing Council Ignites The Fire Of Inquiry
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Poster presented by Lisa Q. Corbett, DNP, APRN, CWOCN; Kimberlee Cheney, BSN, BA, RN, CWOCN; Barbara Falkowski, BSN, RN, CWCN; Carol Lightbody, BSN, RN, COCN; Suzanne Miller, BSN, BA, RN, CWCN; Lisa A. Smith, BSN, RN, CWON; and Roxanne Lapierre, BSN, RN, CWOCN.

conduct knowledge generating research. The first 30 minutes of the meeting are devoted to skills development – from the “nuts and bolts” of poster creation to clarifying the difference between qualitative and quantitative research.

Within the course of a meeting, nurses get a chance to share their inquiries and project proposals, opening up the group for honest and constructive critique and review. Corbett says, “Nurses are constantly coming up with questions. How do we capture that and give it a process for investigating and teasing out the literature?” She credits Dr. Dzuric with helping broaden the scope of nursing research by identifying barriers, data sources and methodology. By providing a forum for discussion and a structure for implementation, projects come to life and develop. Sometimes answers to the nurses’ questions can be found in the literature. Other times, questions are unanswered, revealing an opportunity for further research. Members have developed projects that go on to be accepted at competitive research conferences regionally, nationally and internationally.

The meetings are system-wide and are attended by members from across all HHC entities: All hospitals, Home Care, Research Administration, Post-Acute settings. Members include those in nursing roles as well as staff scientists, statisticians, grant writers, librarians, quality specialists all of whom contribute feedback and insights from a variety of backgrounds.

Corbett hopes that the council continues to grow the collaboration, relationships and mentorship between nursing leaders, nursing students, nurses in practice and to continue to support and conduct nursing research. Creating the culture of inquiry in this forum is a first step to pursuing their projects. By refining it with the support of the council, nurses are one step closer to bringing their project to a broader audience.

If you are interested in learning more about the Hartford HealthCare Nursing Research Council, please contact Samantha.Cote@hhchealth.org.
Twenty five years ago, a group of nurses from 11 Connecticut hospitals and universities across the state was looking for a way to exchange ideas and propagate collaboration in the name of nursing research. In 1996, the Capital Area Alliance for Nursing Research and Research Utilization was born. At the time, their mission was to “promote and improve the health of individuals and communities by supporting evidence-based nursing practice through collaboration.” Since then, the name might have changed but the Alliance has stayed true to its mission and expanded its scope, enhancing and supporting the research being done by nurses across the state.

Lisa Corbett, DNP, APRN, CWOCN, is the current co-chair of the Connecticut Nursing Research Alliance along with Constance Hotchkiss MSN, RN, Division Director of Nursing at Northwestern CT Community College. Lisa says the collaboration between academic institutions and practice environments like hospitals and home care organizations is central to the success of the Alliance. Currently, 25 entities are part of the Alliance.

“The Alliance fosters partnerships between academics and practice,” she says. "It creates a culture that supports nursing evidence-based practice, research and quality improvement and it supports dissemination of work that’s done throughout the state.”

In the 25 years since its inception, the Connecticut Nursing Research Alliance has hosted an annual conference that serves as a forum to present the latest in evidence-based nursing practice. In the months leading up to the conference, abstracts are submitted and are reviewed by a blind peer review panel. The abstracts that are chosen in this highly competitive forum are presented either orally or in poster format. The conference is the biggest event of the Alliance’s year and is widely anticipated and attended, drawing the highest caliber of nationally-recognized speakers. Guest experts from around the country have participated, offering insights and data to support nursing initiatives and research. The conference is an opportunity to showcase original, high quality research being done in the state. Over the years, an abundance of information has been shared, influencing nursing practices far and wide.

Conferences Through the Years

2020 - CT Nursing Research Alliance Reimagined: Virtual Sharing of Evidence-Based Practice Projects
2019 - What Does it Mean to be a Nurse: Finding Joy in Work
2018 - Nursing: Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Environment
2017 - The Nursing Role in Promoting a Culture of Health
2016 - A Just and Safe Culture: Improving Patient Safety
2015 - Promoting a Culture of Safety with Evidence-Based Practice
2014 - Sustaining Quality Patient Outcomes Through Evidence-Based Practice
2013 - Revolutionizing Nursing Practice Through Education
2012 - Outcomes-Focused Innovations
2011 - Evidence-Based Practice: Health Reform: Connecting Practice to Policy
2010 - The Value of Nursing in Achieving Patient Outcomes
2009 - Raising the Voice of Nursing in Quality and Patient Safety
2008 - Evidence Based Practice; Transforming Patient Care
2007 - Evidence Based Practice: The Essence of Nursing
2006 - Caring For Our Patients and Ourselves
2005 - Evidence Based Practice: Living Well, Again Well
2004 - Transcultural Research in Cyberspace
2003 - Prevention of Infectious Diseases: The Public Health Nurse in All of Us
2002 - Partners in Care: Applying Best Practice to Enhance Relationships in Health Care
2001 - Entrusted Care: Applying Nursing Research to Optimize Safe Patient Outcomes
2000 - Enhancing Healthcare Outcomes Through Nursing Research
1999 - Rejuvenating Nursing Practice Through Research
1998 - Supporting Evidence-Based Nursing Practice
1997 - Partnering in Research Utilization

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The theme for the 2021 conference was “Simulation: Exploring the Evidence in Clinical Practice and Education.” Janice Palaganas, PhD, APRN, ANEF, FNAP, FAAN, FSSH from the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions served as the event’s keynote speaker.

During the conference, which was on a virtual platform, Palaganas expounded on the topic of simulation and engaged the group in a simulated “escape room” of sorts. Participants watched on as several volunteers participated in a simulated scenario with the goal of analyzing and solving problems that were presented in a clinical setting.

Breakout rooms were hosted by a number of nurses who shared their work on a variety of topics. Dozens of posters and oral abstracts were presented by Hartford Hospital nurses that day, making for a robust and thought-provoking conference.
Behind The Scenes Of Nursing Research

We sat down with the nurses behind three nursing research projects. Here’s what they had to say about their projects and the process.

### Supporting the Nurse: Increasing Novice Labor And Delivery Nurses’ Self-efficacy On Continuous Labor Support Techniques

**Who:** Anna Riley, RN and Katie Yoder, RN (supported by Sarah Quadrato, RN, Nurse Educator for Women’s Health Services)

**What:** The project’s goal is to increase novice labor and delivery nurses’ self-efficacy on continuous labor support techniques (CLST). As providers who interact with laboring patients most frequently, labor and delivery nurses are ideally situated to provide continuous labor support to our patients.

**Why:** We hope that with increasing nurse self-efficacy on CLST is that there will be an increase in continuous labor support to our patients. Literature supports the need for continuous labor support as it has been shown to increase patient outcomes, increase patient satisfaction, increase breastfeeding rates, and decrease the nulliparous term singleton vertex (NTSV) cesarean rates. As our EBI project has shown an increase in nurse self-efficacy on CLST after our intervention and we look forward to working with our educator on adding a hands-on learning class during orientation to novice labor and delivery nurses on CLST.

**How:** We began this project through the MSN program at the University of Hartford and worked with our women’s health leadership team and the nursing research council to solidify our project. Anna Riley noted that during her orientation as an experienced nurse but new hire to labor and delivery there was no standardized education on CLST and often times it was left to the preceptors to take on that role. It was noted that there was a wide variance on education on CLST that orientees were receiving, all based off the preceptors’ experience and knowledge of CLST.

**Key takeaways:** The project started as an idea, but we were not sure how to move forward with it. Our unit educator Sara Quadrato was invaluable in connecting us with Lisa Corbett and Laura Dzurec. They assisted us in navigating the nursing research council. It was inspiring and encouraging to have so much support from throughout the hospital with our project. Our advice to other nurses is simple: ask questions. If you aren’t sure where to begin your project, start with your on-unit resources like your educator or manager. Reach out to the nursing education department or the research council. Even if you are not ready to present to them, they can guide you on what you need to move forward.

### A retrospective evaluation of phenotypical and mediating factors in oral health and general symptom clustering over the course of chemo and radiation treatment for head and neck cancer: Associations with treatment adherence and need for hospitalization

**Who:** Hayley Dunnack, MS, RN, CMSRN, OCN PhD student at UConn, Hartford Outpatient Clinical Nurse (Per Diem)

**What:** I performed a chart review of over six years chemo and radiation of head and neck cancer as it pertained to symptoms that patients experience during treatment and into survivorship and how they relate to the demographic data.

**Why:** The goal is to identify possible clusters and determine what puts patients at more risk for severe symptoms. Identifying patients more at risk for having complications and issues will help Nurse Navigators with identifying risk factors to make patients more comfortable and to decrease hospitalization rate.

**How:** I drew upon my clinical expertise for the project. The topic of oral health relating to chemo and radiation was the inspiration and ultimately determining how we can help improve their quality of life. I received IRB approval in February 2021. Nearly 300 charts were reviewed between March – August 2021, and I am currently working on data analysis.

**Key takeaways:** It’s important to ask yourself, “Do you have time to work on it at work?” I love process improvement and like to have a voice at the table. How does it fit in your day – does your management team support you? Do you have time at home? Finding a topic that you’re passionate about is important because it shouldn’t feel like a project.

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Interprofessional Collaboration for accurate reporting of Patient Safety Indicators (PSIs) and Hospital-Acquired Conditions (HACs)

Who: Mary Alice Dewees BSN, RN, CCDS, CRC and interprofessional team members across the system, providers, Clinical Documentation Integrity (CDI), quality, and coding.

What: I’m the Manager for CDI at HHC. CDI partners with providers, Quality Management and Coding for patient medical accuracy. An example would be to identify if a patient acquired an infection while in the hospital and if so, to identify whether it is a quality of care issue or a documentation issue. We work to get every patient’s record as accurate as possible. This project zeroed in on quality indicators of safety and harm events and hospital-acquired conditions. CDI nurses send provider queries to request clarification in the medical record to assure it is 100% clear whether a documented finding is an actual harm event or hospital acquired in order to accurately code the record. Accurate documentation drives whether an event is included or excluded from a quality outcome and reporting perspective.

Why: Identifying that we were reporting and coding some documented diagnoses on a claim that perhaps were not truly reportable events. Were we over-reporting harm events on our patients? We suspected that was true.

How: The interprofessional review group of key stakeholders including providers, CDI, Quality, and Coding was created to review potential documentation opportunities. The team meets at least twice a week on the system level. I collected data from six months before the interprofessional review group was initiated and six months after to compare volumes of reported PSI and HACs. There was a 34% decrease in reported PSIs and a 22% decrease in reported hospital acquired infections (HAI) after the implementation of the interprofessional review group.

Key takeaways: There was a lot of background work to do to reach completion. Dr. Laura Dzurec was amazingly supportive throughout the process. I learned how important it is to identify a mentor. That person will help you through the process and limit unnecessary steps, utilizing time and resources wisely. I enjoyed collaborating, building structure, getting out of a silo and all key stakeholders working with the same goals in mind.
For the better part of two years, so much focus has been on COVID-19 and vaccinations, and rightfully so. At the same time, Concetta Rotondo, RN and Karen D’Attilio, BSN, RN were cognizant of the threat of pneumonia for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) which cannot be understated nor forgotten. The two nurses in Hartford Hospital’s Adult Primary Care Center saw an opportunity to protect patients with COPD from pneumonia in the ambulatory setting and hit the ground running.

Knowing that COPD and pneumonia can be a deadly combination and that pneumococcal disease is a leading cause of vaccine-preventable illness and death, they sought to vaccinate those who otherwise may not have received an inoculation. While vaccination is recommended for patients over the age of 65 and high risk, adherence rates remain low and that was a troubling statistic for Rotondo and D’Attilio.

The two got to work and identified 200 patients with a COPD diagnosis who were treated in the past three years, taking note of their history of receiving, or not receiving, either the PPV23 or PCV13 pneumococcal vaccine. From there, the patients were contacted and appointments were scheduled to get the vaccine. Nurses proactively reviewed resident schedules to identify patients who fit the criteria for the shot.

Central to the project was the development of a Best Practice Advisory (BPA) in the electronic medical record (EMR), helping to ensure the implementation was successful and smooth. The team also educated providers on the application and use of the BPA.

The end result has been remarkable. The nurse-driven initiative increased the Pneumovax 23 vaccination to 89% and the Prevnar 13 vaccination to 77%. Maybe best of all is the patient satisfaction – not only are they vaccinated, when they probably wouldn’t have been if not for this initiative, but patients have been very appreciative of the efforts to get them vaccinated. Internally, resident providers had high praise of the nursing collaboration in this initiative. One unexpected positive bonus to the initiative is the increased vaccination rate among the clinic population for TDAP, Hepatitis A and B and influenza. Rotondo and D’Attilio speculate the review of patient charts prior to arrival by the nurses triggered the increase by informing providers of the need. Patients willingly accepted two vaccines at a visit which increased the volume as well.

Further research will reveal if vaccinations reduced hospital admissions due to pneumonia and COPD, but for now, Rotondo and D’Attilio are proud of their work to get so many high-risk patients vaccinated.

The initiative has proven so successful that it is now being implemented system wide.
Nurse-driven Innovation Drives Organizational Improvement

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Results

### Pre-Initiative – Pneumovax 23
- **Vaccinated:** 67%
- **Unvaccinated:** 33%

Vaccinated = 88
Unvaccinated = 44
Total patients = 132

### Post-Initiative – Pneumovax 23
- **Vaccinated:** 89%
- **Unvaccinated:** 11%

Vaccinated = 118
Unvaccinated = 14
Total patients = 132

### Pre-Initiative – Pneumovax 13
- **Vaccinated:** 35%
- **Unvaccinated:** 65%

Vaccinated = 32
Unvaccinated = 59
Total patients = 91

### Post-Initiative – Pneumovax 13
- **Vaccinated:** 77%
- **Unvaccinated:** 23%

Vaccinated = 70
Unvaccinated = 23
Total patients = 91
We congratulate these Hartford Hospital nurses on their recent achievements.

Ayer Neuroscience Institute:
- Jenelle Dunstan, BSN, RN from N9/N9SD completed her Trauma Care After Resuscitation (TCAR) Certification.

Cardiovascular Services/Heart & Vascular Institute (HVI):
- At right, Morgan Slater, BSN, RN, MEDSURG-BC from BSE received Med/Surg certification. She is currently pursuing her Master’s in Nursing Education.
- Dominique Petrucci, BSN, RN and Alexis Klemka, BSN, RN from the Electrophysiology Lab received Registered Cardiac Electro-physiology Specialist Certification (RCES)

Critical Care:
- Brianna Meka, BSN, RN, CCRN, TCRN joined C8I in the Graduate Nurse Critical Care Program in 2019. She completed her certifications in both Trauma and Critical Care certifications in September 2021.

Institute of Living:
- At left, Jill Day, NP began her 10 month post graduate psychiatric nurse practitioner behavioral health fellowship on August 30, 2021—a program that bridges the gap between acquisition and application and fosters confidence and competence in clinical practice. Jill is a recent graduate of Fairfield University. Her specialty is child-adolescent psychiatry and she will be training on our inpatient units, outpatient programs, as well as rotating through several specialty areas. Jill has recently been accepted into Yale’s DNP program and will be doing the fellowship and the DNP program, concurrently. Her DNP research interest involves optimizing care for the LGBTQ patient and her fellowship placement at the IOL Right Program will provide her an opportunity to integrate her DNP education with our program on gender health.
- Loubet Budd, BSN, RN has completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Quinnipiac University.
- Vanessa Castellanos, BSN, RN has completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, University of Rhode Island.
- Amber Colello, MSN, RN, PMHNP has completed her Master of Science as a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at University of Saint Joseph.
- Heather Hogaboom, MSN, RN, APRN, PMHNP has completed her Master of Science in Nursing as a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner at Regis College.
- Marcela Gonzalez, BSN, RN has completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, at Central Connecticut State University.
- Paul Paseos, MBA, RN has completed his Master’s Degree in Business Administration at the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts at Amhurst.
- Sonia Perez, MSN, RN has completed her Master of Science in Nursing in Hospice and Palliative Care at Central Connecticut State University.
- Nishma Santiago, BSN, RN has completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Elms College.
- Anne-Marie Storey, MSN, RN has completed her Master of Science in Organizational Nursing Leadership, Quinnipiac University.

Nursing Education:
- Laura Dzurec, PhD, PMHCNS-BC, ANEF, FAAN was published “Dzurec, L. (2021). I’m still a nurse. Editorial. Rehabilitation Nursing Journal,46, 185-186.” Laura also had the following presentations in 2021:
  - Piecing together a way to make sense of workplace bullying. Omaha, NB Veterans Hospital, Nursing Journal Club (Virtual). 6/23/21.

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**STAR Team:**
- At right, Danielle Shapiro MSN, RN from STAR Team earned her Certified Clinical Nurse Educator (CNEd) certificate. She is currently pursuing her DNP at Sacred Heart University.

**Wound & Hyperbaric Center:**
- Anna Jones, BSN, RN, CWON obtained wound and ostomy certification.
- Nicole Hunt, BSN, RN, CWCN obtained wound care certification.

**Emergency Services:**
- The Emergency Department Observation Unit (EDOU) reached 100 days without a fall on September 11, 2021.

**Volunteering In Support Of Our Local Communities**
Laura J. Bailey, MSN, RNC-OB Vice President Patient Care Services, Hartford Region and Mandy Richards, MSN, RN, APRN-ACNS-BC, NEA-BC Executive Vice President and Chief Nursing Officer, Hartford HealthCare volunteered at the 32nd Annual Hartford Hospital Auxiliary Benefit Golf Tournament on September 13, 2021 raising money for the “The Hartford Hospital Food Farmacy” a proactive approach to our mission of improving the health and healing of the people and communities we serve.
Mary Jane Densmore MS, BA, RN (HHSN ’69)

The Alumnae Association of HH recently celebrated its annual banquet, carrying on a tradition that began simply in the late 1800’s: a gathering of nurses to celebrate each other, the great profession of nursing, and our beloved Alma Mater, Hartford Hospital School of Nursing.

The first alumnas “tea party”, as it was then called, was held in the Hartford apartment of Hannah Russel in 1893 to celebrate the recent graduates of Hartford Hospital Training School and to share stories and memories of their first few years as nurses at HH. They must have been delighted to receive an invitation to a tea party, for their work days were long and grueling and they rarely had a day for fun. The attendees were only 12 in number but they so enjoyed the opportunity to share stories and weave friendships that they vowed to continue the tradition the following year. And so it began...

On Sunday, September 19, the 127th Annual AAHHSN banquet was held with nearly 200 attendees. Nurses traveled from across the country representing classes of 1949 through 1976, its final year. Many said this was the best to date, but might not Hannah Russel have said the same? My nurse friend, to whom I mentioned our upcoming banquet, was astounded to learn of our annual event. She said, quite bluntly, but precisely on target, “Your school has been closed for almost 50 years, and you STILL have a yearly reunion?! That is crazy amazing!”

That nearly 200 nurses, most of whom were well over the age of 70, traveled by plane, train and automobile to join in this celebratory tradition is truly “crazy amazing”!

The long history of nursing that has been represented at this event over the past 127 years is also “crazy amazing”!

Our oldest member attending the most recent banquet was Euphemia Gardiner Serpliss from the class of 1950. She, I quickly determined, is “crazy amazing” as well. This tiny 93 year old, wearing a hot pink sweater and skirt approached me at the conclusion of the program and was quite excited to tell me about herself. She stated, “I’m the oldest grad here today and I still “work” 3 days a week at HH, as a volunteer. When I wished her continued good health, she told me that she nearly died 3 years ago in a terrible accident. She was not expected to pull through, but pull through she did! She said to me, “They didn’t know who they were dealing with. I’m an HH grad and we’re a tough bunch.”

So, very much like Euphemia, and so many of our alumnae sisters, the Alumnae Association continues to live on, as a robust and vibrant entity, still touching the lives of many, with compassion, kindness and love. We are all, individually and as a unit, pretty “crazy amazing”! This is evidenced by, as in past years, the good deeds that have been accomplished over the past 12 months. We awarded 12 scholarships for a total of $50,000; reimbursed 27 alumns in the medical fund for a total of $180,000; bequeathed nine charitable organizations for a total of $27,000.

So, as you can see, our Alumnae Association continues to serve and touch the hearts of many, much as our nurses have done for the past 127 years, in their varied careers.

Like a mighty oak, no longer growing but still standing firm and strong: sustained by us, its leaves, not individually but together as a “crazy amazing” force. Let us look to another year and hold onto the joy and happiness that we shared at our 127th banquet and let that joy grow over the upcoming months until we can delight in the company of one another once again and celebrate another “crazy amazing” banquet of love and friendship.

Wishing you all peace and good health,

Mary Jane Densmore MS, BA, RN (HHSN ’69)
Growing up in East Hartford, young Maura Mintel was influenced by nursing when her ailing grandmother came to live with her family. She fondly remembers the lessons the nurses taught her mother about caring for her grandmother, and it's something that Maura Mintel Pauli credits with moving her into a career in nursing.

“When I was in high school making life decisions, there weren’t many options for women,” she recalls. “I was a little shy and public speaking was daunting. I made a decision to get into nursing at the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing (HHSN).”

Reflecting on life as a nurse in the late 1960’s, Mintel Pauli says, “It was all about patient care and the nurse/patient relationship. My experience at HHSN gave me such a strong clinical base. Clinical practice was so strong from the start, it became my passion.” She also remembers Mrs. Peters, an instructor at HHSN. “We would go into a room to see a patient and she would have us hold out our hands upon entering, as a gesture of providing service. That image always stuck with me – going into a room with my hands extended to serve patients. It was consistent with my personality and values of caring for people.”

Mintel Pauli completed the three-year program at HHSN, graduating in 1969. From there, she hit the ground running, and over the next four years climbed through the ranks while earning a BSN from Georgia State University and then her MSN degree as a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Cardiovascular Nursing from Catholic University in Washington, DC. She returned to Connecticut in 1978 and started working at New Britain General Hospital (NBGH), currently known as the Hospital of Central Connecticut, as a clinical specialist. She was at NBGH from 1978 to 1991, progressing from clinical specialist to clinical director and ultimately Vice President of Nursing at the hospital.

While she was VP of Nursing, Mintel Pauli never lost sight of her passion for clinical practice. She took a position as VP of Nursing and Support Services at Connecticut Hospice, where she spent two years. During that time, she received a post-master’s degree as a Family Nurse Practitioner from Pace University.

With that degree in hand, Mintel Pauli took a position at Hartford Hospital, where she spent the rest of her career in a variety of positions. She was an acute care nurse practitioner for six years and after that she worked as an Adult Primary Care Nurse Practitioner at the Outpatient Clinic at the Brownstone Building from 1999 until her retirement in 2013. Mintel Pauli admits it was a very rewarding position, saying, “I had my own patient load, we had residents there in a teaching environment that felt like independent practice. That was probably my favorite job. I loved the whole experience.”

Mintel Pauli notes that all of her life’s work, professionally and personally, is rooted in faith. In retirement, the New Milford resident is busy teaching bible studies and quilting for various charity causes. Nursing is part of who she is and it shaped her life in countless ways. With several years of retirement under her belt, Mintel Pauli is content. “Before COVID, my husband and I loved traveling by cruising. Nursing is constantly in my life and I never regretted going into it.”
In the late 1950’s, Marion Brooks was a nursing student at the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing. The young lady from Bristol, CT gained more than an education at HHSN, she built friendships at the school with other women who shared her love of nursing and travel.

Soon after her graduation, she and several other classmates embarked on a trip to Europe, traveling from country to country, seeing the sights. A couple of her travel companions soon became her roommates when they all found themselves back home in the states and pursuing graduate degrees in Boston. One of the roommates had a cousin named Victor Muschell. The Torrington, CT native was in law school at nearby Boston College, where Marion was pursuing her BSN degree, as well. Courtship ensued as Marion held a job with the Brookline Visiting Nurse Association (VNA).

The Muschells were married in 1964 and returned to Torrington, where they planted roots and built their family. Marion worked at the Brooker Memorial VNA until the birth of their first child in 1966, when she took time off to raise their two young daughters.

In 1970, Marion returned to the workforce, beginning what would be a 40-year career at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington. In the span of her career she would work as a psychiatric nurse, working her way through the department and ultimately as a benefits administrator at the hospital.

Around town, everyone knew Marion. She was very involved in community affairs in Torrington, immersing herself in organizations like the Nutmeg Conservatory, Brooker VNA and the United Way. She was a recipient of the local Rotary Club Paul Harris Award, given to individuals who demonstrate good will, social understanding and generosity in their local communities and in the world.

Around 2010, Marion began to notice subtle changes in her health, notably tremors. She was subsequently diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease. The disease progressed slowly, and Marion was determined to make a difference for others like her. Together with Carol Pathe, another Parkinson’s patient, the two founded Torrington Area Parkinson’s Support Group (TAPSG). The organization is thriving and supports about 80 Parkinson’s patients who meet monthly at the local senior center.

Marion succumbed to the disease in April of 2018, but her work was not done. She chose to donate her body to science, to be used for Parkinson’s research. In that act, Marion’s gift allowed for valuable medical research in the fight against Parkinson’s disease. She lived a full life, even after its end.
In the 1920s, at the center of Heublein Courtyard at the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, stood a sculpture in a fountain. Was it a heron? An egret? A crane? Whatever the species, nurses called him Hepatitis, affectionately named for the way the water discolored when the fountain was due for cleaning.

Over the years, the courtyard gave way to development and the grounds were repurposed as the hospital expanded. Today, Hepatitis’ memory and the space it occupied have been resurrected and reimagined with the new John Kelley Springer Courtyard and Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing Fountain.

“Our dad would be so proud that this is happening,” shared Kelley Springer Braun. “He loved the nurses, he loved education, and I am sure he is happy to know that people will come here for solace and hope and learning. We know he is here.”

“John Kelley Springer was at the helm of Hartford Hospital for 13 years. Under his leadership, a transplant program, a trauma program and LIFE STAR were developed,” shared Vice President of Operations Cheryl Ficara. “He was a beloved leader who had a passion for lifting Hartford Hospital to its highest potential. Nurses at the hospital held John in high regard — he took time to remember names and faces, and was always interested in their lives, both professionally and personally.”

The courtyard and fountain were made possible by generous donations and support from the School of Nursing Alumnae Association, Dr. Evan Fox and family, Marcia and John Hincks, Dr. and Mrs. Lenworth Jacobs, Eric and Penny Marziali, David and Anne Palmer, and Doris and the late Pete Thomas.

Hartford Hospital School of Nursing was an influential learning institution from 1877 until 1976, shaping and educating generations of nurses. To this day, the School of Nursing Alumnae Association is a vibrant and active group, giving back to the hospital in so many ways. Its members continue to play an active role in the progress and mission of the hospital.
It was wonderful to get together with almost 200 alumnae and guests at our annual Alumnae Banquet in September which was held at the Sheraton Hartford South Hotel in Rocky Hill, CT. It was especially meaningful since we could not get together in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. The date for next year’s banquet is September 18, 2022. Pictures from this year’s banquet will appear in the Spring edition of the Nursing Magazine.

2021 Scholarship News

The Alumnae Association this year awarded nursing scholarships to 12 individuals for a total of $50,000. Many of the recipients are Hartford Hospital employees including granddaughters and nieces of current alumnae members. All are the brightest and most dedicated nurses who are extremely deserving of these grants. Recipients include: Emily Capozza, Mary-Ann Cyr, Tara Halpin, Julie Harper, Anne Machuga, Diana March, Kaitlyn Robichaud, Allison Rounds (Niece of Kathy Boyd Didier ’69), Amanda Santoro (granddaughter of Lila Curtis MacDonald ’67), Clarissa Sarmiento, Elizabeth Stahl (granddaughter of Mary Lou Butterfield Powers ’61) and Christine Warren.

We congratulate you all. It is a pleasure to support you, and we extend our best wishes for continued success in nursing.

Medical Reimbursement News

The Medical Fund cap per alumnae member has been increased. The decision was made by the Board of Directors and was announced at the Fall Alumnae Banquet. This applies to all alumnae members of the Medical Fund and especially those who have previously maxed out their portion over the past years. Once again, these alumnae can utilize the medical fund for their medical expenses/needs going forward. Any questions please contact Terry Gwozdz at 860-257-3171.
Alumnae

The Pillbox

CLASS OF 1947

Johanna Deutsch Meisterling was one of the founding members of the Berlin Chapter AARP 3035, dating back to the 1970s. She was asked to be president of the association and with “dogged determination” built the organization to about 400 people. The group offers many programs and volunteer efforts depending on the needs of the community. Her accomplishments were written up in the *New Britain Herald* newspaper. Joanna was also in the Army Nurses Corps which she credits with paying for her education.

CLASS OF 1959

Judith White Redmond is looking forward to rebuilding and reuniting with friends and relatives after recent wild fires at Yosemite National Park. Her property is near the park and has proved to be a pleasurable and real retreat. There is an abundance of birds, rabbits and small wild animals. People have come from all over to help rebuild the destruction. Judi is a lifetime member of International Hosteling and is looking forward to building a comfort station to help with the rebuilding.

CLASS OF 1964

Caryl Hockenberry Donovan describes her family as a “bunch of nurses.” Her mom was an LPN, her daughter a surgical ICU nurse for 32 years so far, and Caryl was a pediatric nurse for 48 years. Her granddaughter recently graduated with a Nursing degree from Villanova and now works in the medical ICU at NYU Medical Center.

CLASS OF 1965

Four members of the class of 1965 recently got together in York, Maine.

CLASS OF 1966

Members of the Class of 1966 recently had lunch at the Publick House in Sturbridge, MA and had a wonderful day reminiscing.
IN MEMORIAM

“`My niece and scholarship recipient Susan Donovan and her husband were very impressed with the entire Alumnae Banquet Day. They were grateful for the scholarship but thought there was such a positive sense of nurses supporting nurses. They loved it and were so happy they were able to attend.”
– Christine Johnson ’61

“I thought the spring edition of our nursing magazine was outstanding. I was so moved by the entire issue but especially the Pillbox which is the Alumnae’s contribution. The articles about Shirley Girouard and Jean Landon Smith were so inspirational. I am so proud of the accomplishments of so many of our alumns and thank you for sharing their stories with the masses. The pictures you included were just perfect and the back cover made me cry. I may be extra sensitive these days but this issue really hit me hard – in a good way. Thank you so much for your never-ending hard work.”
– Mary Jane Pappalardo Densmore ’69
President, Alumnae Association

Let Us Hear From You!

We would love to receive photos and news from HHSN alumns. Please mail information to the Alumnae Association of the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing, 560 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106 or e-mail patciarcia@snet.net.

Give A Lasting Gift

Your contribution today will make a difference to our nursing education program. Mail your gift to Hartford Hospital, Fund Development, 80 Seymour Street, Hartford, CT 06102. You can act now and show your commitment to nursing education forever by including Hartford Hospital and/or the Alumnae Association of HHSN Inc. in your estate plans. For more information, please contact Lynn Rossini, vice president, philanthropy at 860-545-2162 or at Lynn.Rossini@hhchealth.org

IN MEMORIAM

Elisie McKinney MacSata ’41
Naomi Laran Netupsky ’41
Clarissa Cruden Miller ’46
Mary Louise Lynch Bathelt ’47
Merle Brogard Miller ’50
Joanne Bauman Colli ’53
Nihla Libby Lapidus ’53
Lois Roden Dragone ’54
Sheila Reinhold Barnhart ’59
Nancy Nagel Dubin ’59
Concetta Pappalarado Merz ’59
Patricia Frangiamore Rypysc ’59
Dianne Edwards Eb ’61
Mary Horner Butler ’64
Geraldine Sutak Bielomyza ’65
Judith Adamowich ’66
Judith Squires McCarthy ’68
Carol Toomey Towne ’68
Deborah Osborne ’72
Nancy Grobelski Merrow ’76

PHYSICIANS

James F. Donovan, MD Orthopedic Surgeon
Russell Robertson, MD ENT Surgeon
James Michael Streeto, MD Internal Medicine/Diabetes Specialty