Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center

Outcomes Report 2020

Celebrating more than 20 years of outstanding eye care
1998-2020
Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center
2020 Outcomes Report

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LEADERSHIP

At Hartford Hospital and Hartford HealthCare we are always laser focused on providing high quality, coordinated care to our patients each and every day. While the COVID-19 pandemic may have challenged us like nothing before, it has also strengthened our commitment to improving the quality of life for the people in our community.

The Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center is an excellent example of this vision. For more than 22 years, our Center has been a leading destination for outstanding care, a place where patients have come to know and trust our doctors and staff for their skills and expertise.

Here, we aim to do more than simply describe our commitment to clinical excellence. Our vision demands that we be fully transparent and continually demonstrate our success to the people we serve. Fortunately, we are not alone in wanting to look closely at the impact of our work. We are grateful that physicians and patients alike frequently ask for quality data so they can better understand the outcomes of care delivery.

That’s why we are so proud to share our 2020 Eye Surgery Center Outcomes Report. We benchmark ourselves against the very best organizations in eye surgery, both nationally and internationally, to ensure we are meeting the highest standards. As a result, our patients can feel confident they are receiving world-class care when they choose our Eye Surgery Center.

This report highlights the superb work of our physician leaders, affiliated physicians, support staff and clinical partners. The entire team works tirelessly to surpass all expectations for care and satisfaction. Their results reflect our culture and bring our values of excellence and safety to life.

Bimal Patel | President, Hartford Region

www.eyesurgerycenter.org
An entire world can close in around a person whose eyesight is impaired, impacting quality of life, independence and livelihood.

For people with diseases of the eye, COVID-19 put many procedures and surgeries on hold temporarily, while healthcare workers and facilities mobilized to combat the virus as it made its way through Connecticut, New England and the nation.

In that time, much was learned about the protocols and practices that keep patients, visitors, providers and workers safe. At Hartford HealthCare, we are proud to be leading the way in patient safety in the age of COVID-19. Our surgeries are back on track and better than ever. At our Eye Surgery Center — as we have across our health system — we have implemented added precautions to ensure the safety of our patients including temperature and symptom screening of all staff and patients, requiring masks for patients and staff and testing for COVID-19 prior to surgery.

At Hartford HealthCare our core values are integrity, excellence, compassion and safety. Now more than ever, these values are guiding everything we do across our system, and are on display every day at the Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center. Here you will find deeply experienced surgeons and staff members using the most advanced technology in a state of the art outpatient surgical center designed, built, and equipped to provide the highest quality surgical eye care available. We combine our exceptional surgical performance together with compassion, comfort and convenience.

In these pages, I am confident you will see for yourself the excellent services, coordinated care and expertise that set the Eye Surgery Center above the rest. From clinical results, to quality and safety, to patient satisfaction — there is no better place for patients with diseases of the eye.
AFFILIATED EYE SURGERY CENTER PHYSICIANS

A destination for world-class eye surgery

We’re proud to have the best and brightest ophthalmologists affiliated with the Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center. More than 40 board-certified physicians, with more than 30 office locations across the state, have trusted our center for their patients’ care.

Patrick Albergo, MD
Duane Austin, MD
Robert Block, MD
Ari Brandsdorfer, MD
D. Matthew Bushley, MD
Daniel Chin, MD*
Scott Dolin, MD*
Martin Edwards, MD*
William Ehlers, MD
Geoffrey Emerick, MD*
David Emmel, MD*
Paul Gaudio, MD
C. Mitchell Gilbert, MD
Michael Gingold, MD
Laura Hall, MD
Jay Hellreich, MD*
Pamela Henderson, MD
David Hill, MD*
Jeremy Hwang, MD
David Jeng, MD
Michael Koval, MD
Lyndon Lee, MD
Roger Luskind, MD*
Kristy Mascarenhas, MD*
Patricia McDonald, MD*
Kevin McMahon, MD*
Richard Molk, MD*
Raji Mulukutla, MD*

* An asterisk denotes our Quality Improvement Partners. These physicians are committed to improving health outcomes through data collection and other methodologies.

Serving the community

Hartford Hospital’s ophthalmologists have a long-standing commitment to community health. For decades, our doctors have donated their time and expertise to Brownstone Health Services, which provides needed medical care to the underserved and uninsured in the local area. Brownstone cares for upwards of 250 medical patients a day.

Eye care is one of the many specialties offered. Since 2013, two ophthalmologists from the Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center have provided outpatient eye care.

They screen and follow patients with systemic eye disease and monitor patients on an ongoing basis for uncomplicated eye problems. They also triage and make referrals for specialized eye care for those patients that require more advanced and complex care.

Our ophthalmologists pride themselves in providing care to patients who would not otherwise receive it. In 2019, they saw 300 eye patients at Brownstone, as well as provided charity care to over a thousand patients in their private offices. The Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center also provided $105,000 in charity care to over a thousand patients in need.

Additionally, they provide 24/7 emergency eye care coverage and consult services to the Hartford Hospital Emergency Department.

www.eyesurgerycenter.org
Our surgical experience

Founded in 1998, the Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center is a regional leader in surgical eye care, offering procedures to treat cataracts, glaucoma, corneal diseases, eyelid malfunctions and tumors, and select retinal diseases.

At the Eye Surgery Center, we perform more cataract and glaucoma procedures than anyone else in Connecticut. And we use the most advanced technologies available. We were the first eye surgery center in New England to offer Femtosecond-Laser Assisted Cataract Surgery — a minimally invasive, bladeless option that enhances precision during eye surgery.

We also offer the ORA/VerifEye and Verion systems, sophisticated technology that help our surgeons more accurately select and place lens implants during cataract surgery — allowing for improvement in customized vision correction for astigmatism at the same time. This tailored approach means patients have better visual outcomes immediately after surgery and for a lifetime.

The data in this report is based on an analysis of more than 2,000* procedures performed at the Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center.

Breakdown of procedures

- **7,778** cataract surgeries
- **408** combined cataract and glaucoma surgeries
- **288** micro-invasive glaucoma surgeries
- **2,706** other laser procedures
- **470** astigmatism correcting lens implants
- **218** traditional glaucoma surgeries
- **310** presbyopia correcting lens implants
- **149** eyelid surgeries

* Sample was obtained by means of a double randomization process using the last digit of randomly assigned hospital ID numbers chosen in a random sequence.
At the Eye Surgery Center, how patients feel is important to us. We are proud that nearly 99 percent of our patients say they are satisfied with their surgical outcome.

**Survey of Eye Surgery Center Patients**

- **Satisfaction with pain control**: 99.1%
- **Treated with courtesy and respect**: 99.9%
- **Satisfaction with surgical outcome**: 98.9%

* 2014-2016 data
** 2019 data
Cataracts are a clouding of the eye’s lens that results in decreased vision. They are fairly common, with most people developing them with age. We use traditional and laser-assisted techniques to perform cataract surgery with unprecedented precision — and without using a scalpel.

Our Eye Surgery Center has some of the lowest intraoperative complication rates when compared to international benchmarks. The most common complication is rupture of the capsular support structure. Of the 1,406 cataract surgeries analyzed in 2019, 1.0% experienced this intraoperative complication. International benchmarks are between 0.3 – 4.4%.

**Percentage of Intraoperative Complications**

* (lower is better)

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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Eye Surgery Center</th>
<th>International Benchmark</th>
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* According to data from Massachusetts Eye and Ear
Glass prescriptions are measured in units called diopters. A surgical result within 1 diopter is considered a good outcome. A surgical result within 0.5 diopters is considered an excellent outcome.

During the 2019 calendar year, 98.3 percent of 1,406 eyes studied achieved within one diopter of predicted refraction after cataract surgery. The international benchmark is between 71 percent and 94 percent. The Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center has met or exceeded these international benchmarks for successful cataract surgery.
Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center 2020 Outcomes Report

VISUAL ACUITY

Corrected Visual Acuity with Glasses

Hartford Hospital's Eye Surgery Center results compared very favorably to national benchmarks. 20/40 or better vision was achieved by 96.7 percent of Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center patients compared to 83.2 percent of patients in the national benchmark study.

* 20/40 or better visual acuity is required to drive in Connecticut
** American Academy of Ophthalmology, IRIS Registry (Intelligence Research In Sight)
*** Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Uncorrected Visual Acuity (No Glasses)

* 20/40 or better visual acuity is required to drive without glasses in Connecticut
GLAUCOMA

Eye Pressure Levels

Glaucoma is a disease of the eye in which high pressure damages the optic nerve. The optic nerve is responsible for transmitting images from the retina to the brain. Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center surgeons perform two types of surgery to treat glaucoma: minimally invasive glaucoma surgery (MIGS) and traditional glaucoma surgery. A total of 184 eye surgeries were evaluated.

Traditional glaucoma surgery includes filtering trabeculectomies, tubes and xen which make small openings in the eye to allow for fluid to leave the eye. MIGS surgery involves the use of lasers to decrease the production of fluid and small filtering stents.

The goal of glaucoma surgery is to lower pressure over a three-month follow-up period. With MIGS surgery, the average pressure drop was 4.4 points. The more severe glaucoma patients requiring larger pressure decreases with traditional surgery had an average decrease in pressure of 12.3 points, or a 48% reduction.

www.eyesurgerycenter.org
Most glaucoma patients take eye drops to control their pressure. Our eye surgeons were able to significantly decrease the number of drops patients use after surgery.
Hartford Hospital’s Eye Surgery Center complication rates with both MIGS and filter surgery are significantly lower than international benchmarks. The most common complication is transient hyphema (bleeding). In 2019, 1.6% had a complication and 3% of the filtering operations had a complication. International benchmarks for filtering operations are between 1-8 percent. There are currently no national or international benchmarks for MIGS.

*According to data from Massachusetts Eye and Ear*
Many years ago Glastonbury native Bradley Peters was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease that causes severe joint pain. He began several rounds of steroid medication to manage his symptoms — treatment that ultimately helped his arthritis, but worsened the growth of his cataracts in the process.

At 57 years young, Peters said his eye sight deteriorated quickly, to the point where he had to limit his driving because he couldn’t drive safely at night. “One light would usually look like five to me,” he said.

A visit with his ophthalmologist revealed it was time to consider cataract surgery, something that scared him at the time. “As a patient, it was really unnerving for me. I had never been in an operating room before, and now I was going to have an operation on my eye ball,” he recalled. “But I trusted my doctor wholly, and I knew he knew what he was doing.”

His first procedure was performed on his left eye in February 2016.

Using sophisticated technology to take precise measurements, his doctor created a special lens made just for him. Peters had the option of choosing whether he would prefer to have near vision or far version post-surgery, and Peters chose far.

Peters recalls no pain at all during the procedure. He added, “Those nurses are like angels to me. One of the nurses held my hand during the first part of my surgery. It made me feel comforted to know she cared that much — all the nurses were just exceptional.”

When he took his eye patch off the next morning, his result was what he described as crystal-clear vision — better than 20/20. “I haven’t seen like that since I was a little kid.”

He couldn’t wait to have his right eye done the next month, which went as smoothly as the first. “The same nurse held my hand again, and now my eyes both match. I couldn’t be more thrilled with the outcome. I see things more clearly now than I ever have before.”
When you help conservators restore artwork for a living, your eyes are valuable tools of the trade. But for someone with cataracts, dimming eyesight can prevent you from doing your job by dampening colors and blurring your vision.

Henry DePhillips learned this firsthand. As a chemist, he brought his insight to the art world by helping repair and refurbish priceless paintings. But it was his eyesight that brought this work to a halt — keeping him from doing what he loved and keeping his expertise from important restoration projects.

Henry's cataracts made the lenses of his eyes progressively opaque, resulting in hazy vision and muted colors. He knew he needed help and started to learn about laser-assisted cataract surgery, a safe and common procedure often used by older adults whose vision problems are interfering with everyday life.

Henry was interested in the procedure because he was a longtime professor of chemistry at Trinity College in Hartford. Through his teaching and work as a scientist, he had worked with lasers for more than two decades and knew what they could do.

The procedure is painless and usually takes about a half hour to perform.

Henry was amazed with the results. Colors that used to blur together were now bright and clear; vivid shades of red, yellow and blue replaced the dull greys he had become accustomed to. He was able to see greater distance, allowing him to play tennis without glasses and see the ball better.

His experience at the Eye Surgery Center was so good that his wife, Shirley DePhillips, decided to plan the same procedure to address her own cataracts.

Shirley is an actor who performs in regional theater. While Henry experienced blurred vision and muted colors, Shirley's cataracts prevented her from seeing detail—especially on stage.

After a successful procedure, Shirley performs for local audiences without glasses, allowing her to get into character for any role. She notices the improved details everywhere she goes: from seeing the individual leaves on trees to seeing architectural details when she travels to Italy each year with Henry.

Henry and Shirley are grateful each day for their improved vision, saying their only regret is that they waited so long to do it.
Study shows safety in taking blood thinners before eye surgery

Up until recently, doctors had no idea if people who needed eye surgery but were on blood thinners could continue taking their medication safely prior to their procedure. Many patients receive a nerve block on their eye and it was unclear if patients needed to stop taking them before receiving the nerve block.

But thanks to a study led by anesthesiologists at Hartford Hospital’s Eye Surgery Center, patients should feel reassured that they can safely continue their medications when receiving eye nerve blocks for eye procedures. The study, called the Blocking Eyes with Quality and Safety (BEQUEST) Initiative, examines procedures like cataract and glaucoma surgery, and some cornea procedures.

“A lot of our patients are taking blood thinners for serious medical conditions,” said Kevin Finkel, MD, an anesthesiologist at the Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center.

These medications are helpful in preventing heart attacks and strokes, but there hasn’t been much research on the safety of the newer blood thinners and the nerve blocks used in some eye surgeries. This includes medications such as Eliquis (apixaban), Xarelto (rivaroxaban), and Pradaxa (dabigatran etexilate). “About 40 percent of our patients receive a nerve block anesthetic during their eye surgery, with over 50 percent taking some sort of blood thinner. Based on the findings from our study, we don’t want patients to have to stop taking these important medications simply because they are receiving a block. We want to do the safest thing for our patients,” said Dr. Finkel.

In 2014, Dr. Finkel began collecting data on bleeding complications and the quality of the nerve blocks offered at the Center. Since that time, doctors have collected data on nearly 14,000 patients.

The data shows that nerve blocks are incredibly safe and done with high-quality. In fact, 90 percent have been deemed “perfect” blocks. This means that there is no movement and no sensation at all felt by the patients in the eye.

The most serious, but rare complication with a nerve block is a retrobulbar hematoma, which is bleeding behind the eye. The typical incidence of this complication nationally is around 1 to 3 percent. In this study, the incidence was 0.018%, nearly 100 times less than the national average.
What our patients say about us

“The key to making an experience like this as pleasant as possible is compassionate, professional personnel. You have the best in people. You are all to be commended for your ‘patient-first’ mentality!”

“Everyone and everything was excellent. All the staff was friendly and concerned. Thank you Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center. You all did a great job!”

“I received cataract surgery over the past two weeks. I was extremely pleased with every aspect of the process — from the check-in staff to the moment I walked out after surgery. Every single phase and every staff member was pleasant, caring, friendly and professional.”

“All the staff were very pleasant and upbeat, making this a great experience. I will highly rate this facility to anyone — just enjoy the comforting treatment given.”

“Just keep up the great work! I had a very positive experience.”

“Your services were excellent.”

“Thank you to all of the staff for my excellent care.”

“I’m very happy with the treatment I got from the staff and my doctor.”

“The staff was great and courteous. They made me feel very comfortable.”

Everybody was friendly yet professional. They each explained what was going on.”

“All the staff were very professional and concerned about my comfort.”

“My experience was wonderful. The staff was kind, courteous and very professional. 5 stars!”
Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center
2020 Outcomes Report

About Hartford Hospital

Hartford Hospital is an 867-bed, not-for-profit hospital located in the heart of Connecticut's capital city. It has 7,000 employees and an active medical staff that includes more than 1,000 physicians and dentists in 18 departments. The hospital is one of New England's largest tertiary care centers and has one of the region's busiest surgery practices. It is the region's only Level I Trauma Center, as well as a major referral center.

The hospital is a respected academic medical center. It trains physicians in collaboration with the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and is a major teaching site for nurses and allied health professionals. Our Center for Education, Simulation and Innovation is a unique, high-technology medical education center that attracts learners from around the world. U.S. News & World Report annually ranks Hartford Hospital among America's Best Hospitals. The hospital was ranked No. 1 in U.S. News & World Report's latest Regional Ranking. Many of the hospital's clinical programs have received national recognition for quality.

Major centers of clinical excellence include cardiology, oncology, emergency services and trauma, mental health, women's health, orthopedics, bloodless surgery and advanced organ transplantation. The Hartford HealthCare Bone & Joint Institute, which opened in January 2017 adjacent to Hartford Hospital, is Connecticut's first and only orthopedic hospital. Among Hartford Hospital's divisions are the Institute of Living, a 114-bed mental health facility with a national and international reputation for excellence; and Jefferson House, a 104-bed long-term-care facility.

In addition to its 65-acre campus in downtown Hartford, the hospital operates satellite facilities in numerous suburban locations. It owns and operates LIFE STAR — an air ambulance service with bases in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Hartford Hospital was founded in 1854 in response to a community need identified when an industrial explosion resulted in mass casualties and no facility existed to treat the injured. Service to the community remains a Hartford Hospital priority more than 160 years later.
About Hartford HealthCare

Our vision
To be nationally respected for excellence in patient care and most trusted for personalized coordinated care.

Our mission
To improve the health and healing of the people and communities we serve.

Our values

Caring: We do the kind thing.
Every Hartford HealthCare staff member touches the lives of the patients and families in our care. We treat those we serve and each other with kindness and compassion and strive to better understand and respond to the needs of a diverse community.

Safety: We do the safe thing.
Patients and families have placed their lives and health in our hands. At Hartford HealthCare, our first priority — and the rule of medicine — is to protect them from harm. We believe that maintaining the highest safety standards is critical to delivering high-quality care and that a safe workplace protects us all.

Excellence: We do the best thing.
In Hartford HealthCare, only the best will do. We work as a team to bring excellence, advanced technology and best practices to bear in providing the highest-quality care for our patients and families. We devote ourselves to continuous improvement, excellence, professionalism and innovation in our work.

Integrity: We do the right thing.
Our actions tell the world what Hartford HealthCare is and what we stand for. We act ethically and responsibly in everything we do and hold ourselves accountable for our behavior. We bring respect, openness and honesty to our encounters with patients, families and coworkers and support the well-being of the communities we serve.

Visit us at www.hartfordhealthcare.org

www.eyesurgerycenter.org
You can partner with us in achieving these important outcomes. Charitable gifts help make the Hartford Hospital Eye Surgery Center exceptional. Every gift can help support such important uses as patient care, new technology, educational programs, research, and facility improvements.

To give, please visit our website at https://giving.hartfordhospital.org/eye or call our Philanthropy office at 860.972.2322.