

The Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, Hartford Hospital, Hartford, Connecticut

Committed to comprehensive care and services

Hartford Hospital, an 867-bed teaching hospital, has provided cancer care services to Hartford and the surrounding communities of central Connecticut since 1854. The Hartford Hospital cancer program is accredited by the ACOS Commission on Cancer, and is one of only 16 community cancer centers nationwide selected to participate in the National Cancer Institute Community Cancer Centers Program (NCCCP) pilot project. Through collaboration with Dana-Farber Partners Cancer Care, the cancer program helps increase patient access to clinical trials, particularly early phase studies. In another unique partnership, Hartford Hospital participates with the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center in the Total Cancer Care project, a biospecimen research study that aims to examine how molecular and genetic information can help diagnose and treat cancer patients.

Each year, the cancer program at Hartford Hospital sees about 2,770 new cases and accrues 11 percent to clinical trials.

Growing Services to Meet Growing Needs

The Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center is located on the main campus of Hartford Hospital. Also located on the hospital campus are the cancer program's office of clinic research, the tumor registry, and the Moffitt Total Cancer Care support staff.

As visitors enter the cancer center, a boutique (offering image-related patient items such as wigs and prostheses) is to the right. To the left is the reception area beyond which is a large atrium. Located in this area are the cancer center's patient resource library and the program's full-time American Cancer Society (ACS) patient navigator. The Helen &

Harry Gray Cancer Center is one of only two programs in the state with a full-time ACS navigator.

Medical oncology, the hospital-based infusion center, and radiation oncology services are also located within the cancer center. The infusion center provides chemotherapy services, blood transfusions, and antibiotics for cancer patients.

Radiation oncology services include state-of-the-art treatment modalities such as 3D conformal radiation therapy, brachytherapy, CT-based simulation and treatment

planning, intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT), and Trilogy stereotactic radiosurgery system for brain and body sites. The Breast Care Center offers sentinel lymph node biopsy, breast MRI, and breast brachytherapy (MammoSite, Savi™, and Contura).

The cancer program provides multidisciplinary disease-site specific cancer care for breast, colon and rectal, prostate, thoracic/lung, and leukemia and lymphoma. Regularly scheduled multidisciplinary tumor

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The new Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center—Avon opened in July 2008.

Vital Statistics

- Total hospital bed size: 867
- Dedicated inpatient oncology beds: 30 with surge capacity to 32
- Number of new patients seen in 2008: 2,770

Select Support Services

- Survivorship services
- Genetic risk assessment/counseling
- Dedicated oncology dietitian
- Lymphedema program
- Exercise/rehabilitation program
- Pastoral care
- Hotel/housing for patients and family
- Palliative care program
- Hospice care

conferences are attended by medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, pathologists, surgeons, surgical oncologists, urologists, gynecologists, radiologists, oncology nurses, nurse care coordinators, social workers, residents, research nurses, and cancer registry staff. The cancer center has a strong survivorship program and has been recognized by the Lance Armstrong Foundation with a grant to study treatment summaries/wellness plan provision to patients finishing active treatment.

Comprehensive Support Services

The cancer program employs a dedicated support services coordinator and offers patients and their families a wide range of services including social work; nutrition care (provided by the program’s FTE dietitian); and integrative medicine services (such as Reiki, massage therapy, guided imagery, and therapeutic touch, among others).

The cancer program employs two FTE social workers who follow patients by cancer type, staying with the patient throughout the continuum of care—whether inpatient or outpatient. The cancer program, in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin, offers patients access to CHESS (Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System), a research-based Internet support program. CHESS provides online information, support, and decision-making help for patients. The CHESS website includes discussion groups, expert advice, decision and planning guides, reading rooms, and links to additional information for cancer patients. Hartford Hospital is a research partner with the CHESS program, which is licensed by the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

In July 2008, the cancer program opened a new 18,207-square-foot satellite facility, the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center—Avon. The Avon facility provides convenient access to medical, surgical, and radiation oncology services for residents

of Farmington Valley, Litchfield County, and the surrounding area.

Community Outreach

A key component of NCI’s NCCCP pilot is increasing outreach screenings, particularly for underserved populations. Over the past two years, Hartford Hospital’s cancer program has made important advances in extending its outreach screening services. Like many major urban areas, Hartford is home to many cultural and ethnic groups. The cancer program employs a masters-prepared, FTE coordinator for community outreach, and two FTE outreach educators. These staff members have created an outreach network throughout the local community, and, in particular, made efforts to reach those populations that have not traditionally participated in cancer screenings. The program’s bilingual community outreach educator has helped improve communication with community members. “Everyone in the cancer center supports the work of community outreach,” said Donna Handley, vice president of cancer services. “So at any given time, depending on the event and the community, we might send out clinical staff or our clinical trial coordinator or one of our support staff to a particular screening based on the needs assessment done by our community outreach coordinator.”

Exceptional Commitment to Research

Hartford Hospital’s Cancer Clinical Research Office (CCRO) is staffed by eight FTEs, including a department director, four RNs, and two data managers, one of whom functions as a regulatory data manager. Through the program’s collaboration with Dana-Farber Cancer Care Partners, patients have increased access to early phase clinical trials. The cancer center also participates in a number of cooperative group and industry-supported trials.

In 2008 the cancer program received grant funding to help embed research nurses in the program’s medical oncology practices. The

grant funding will allow the program to measure the impact having a dedicated research nurse within in a clinical practice has on patient accrual to clinical trials.

A groundbreaking research collaboration underway at the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center is the Total Cancer Care program that is being conducted in partnership with the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center. Initiated in May 2008, this biospecimen collection project is dedicated to furthering the understanding of how molecular and genetic information can help diagnose and treat cancer. At Hartford Hospital, dedicated staff

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for the Total Cancer Care project includes a masters-prepared project manager; two research assistants; a data manager; and a pathology assistant located within the Pathology Department. To date approximately 600 patients have provided tissue samples through the Total Cancer Care project at Hartford Hospital.

Comprehensive cancer care services, exceptional collaborative efforts, innovative partnerships, and a commitment to research—all characterize the cancer program at Hartford Hospital. These services all rest on a foundation of “strong, dedicated medical leadership,” said Ms. Handley. “From our medical director, Dr. Andrew Salner, to each of our physicians—there is a commitment to providing comprehensive cancer care. We are proud of our program’s commitment to clinical research, our commitment to multidisciplinary care, and our commitment to providing quality care to the underserved in our community. The comprehensiveness of our program and its accessibility to our community are among its strongest assets.” Through partnerships, collaboration, and a commitment to comprehensive care, the cancer program at Hartford Hospital continues to find new ways to reach and serve its community. 