



Waterbury HEALTH

Report to the Community 2022

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On cover: Nurses Stephanie Tomasheski and Dorinda Maurice

Waterbury HEALTH

A Message from the CEO



When I first came to Waterbury Hospital in November 2016 as Chief Medical Officer, I remember instantly being won over by the warm, friendly culture at the hospital. Whenever I walked through the hallways, people smiled and said "Hi."

It soon became clear to me that – in addition to offering a welcoming community hospital environment – Waterbury Hospital is home to a very sophisticated medical staff. The vast majority of our physicians are board certified in their chosen specialties and highly trained.

As CEO of Waterbury HEALTH since November 2021, I now know that both of my initial impressions of the hospital were entirely accurate. As you will learn after reading this community report, Waterbury Hospital combines the best of two very different kinds of hospital.

On the one hand, we are small enough – and approachable enough – to be the kind of place where our patients can feel comforted and well cared for at their time of greatest need. We also care for the sickest and most vulnerable people in our society. In other words, we are a true community hospital.

At the same time, we are a teaching hospital for some of the most prestigious academic medical institutions in

the state of Connecticut. Our physicians are dedicated to maintaining our long tradition of educating and training future generations of doctors and other health care providers. And with investment from Prospect, we have been able to add advanced medical technology and equipment to support a higher level of patient care.

There is no denying that the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting surge in inflation have had a significant negative impact on virtually all health care systems in the country – and Waterbury HEALTH is no exception. Even with these ongoing challenges, however, we remain fully committed to our patients, staff, and our community.

We are taking significant steps to ensure Waterbury HEALTH has a stable operational and financial foundation to continue serving our community with safe, quality patient care for many years to come. One of these steps is returning the health system to nonprofit status. We are excited about joining Yale New Haven Health System and we are confident that, working together, we will be able to achieve our common goal of improving patient outcomes and access to care for our greater Waterbury area communities.

Sincerely,

Justin Lundbye, MD
President and CEO, Waterbury HEALTH

Waterbury HEALTH

Waterbury HEALTH offers comprehensive, quality health care services, including primary, emergency, acute and home health care, at various locations in the city of Waterbury and 11 surrounding communities in western Connecticut. The network, which is anchored by Waterbury Hospital, a 357-bed full-service community hospital, also includes Alliance Medical Group, Cardiology Associates of Greater Waterbury, VNA Health at Home, and Access Rehab Centers. As a teaching hospital whose academic affiliations include Yale School of Medicine and Quinnipiac University Frank

H. Netter M.D. School of Medicine, Waterbury Hospital continues its longstanding commitment to training new generations of physicians and other health care providers. Waterbury HEALTH also maintains its support for community programs that improve the health and well-being of residents and families throughout the area. As one of the largest employers in the area, Waterbury HEALTH is a dynamic economic presence, helping support many local vendors and businesses. Waterbury HEALTH became part of Prospect Medical Holdings, Inc., in October 2016.

Waterbury HEALTH Overview	Totals
Licensed Beds	357*
Employees	2,100*
Providers on Staff	620*
Emergency Room Visits	202,663**
Admissions	60,890**
Inpatient Surgeries	14,186**
Outpatient Surgeries	29,879**
Babies Delivered	5,783**

* Data as of September 2022
 ** Data from October 2016 through July 2022

Community Impact	Amount
Payroll	\$821,702,680*
Capital Expenditures	\$56,628,924*
Charity and Other Uncompensated Care Provided	\$36,438,753**
Contribution to Pension Fund	\$16,651,972*
Property and Sales Taxes Paid	\$29,003,453*
Total	\$960,425,782

* Data from October 2016 through July 2022
 ** Data from October 2016 through September 2021



In the late 1800s, the “Brass City” had a pressing need for a hospital to treat its growing population, including the many immigrants working in Waterbury’s nationally renowned brass factories.

For more than 130 years, Waterbury Hospital has served that need. And much more.

Today, the 357-bed full-service community hospital, which opened in 1890 as a 30-bed facility in a Victorian mansion overlooking the city, continues to be an essential component of the greater Waterbury area health care safety net. Approximately 75 percent of its patient population is covered by Medicare or Medicaid (which typically pay lower reimbursement rates than commercial insurance plans) and a significant number of the people it treats are uninsured or unable to pay for the care they receive.

“We’re very proud of the fact that Waterbury Hospital serves everyone. We’re the definition of a safety net hospital: No one who walks through our doors is denied care,” said Justin Lundbye, MD, Waterbury HEALTH’s President and CEO.

Waterbury Hospital has evolved into a sophisticated, technologically advanced medical facility. It is home to four major centers of excellence: cardiology, orthopedic surgery, the Surgical Innovation Center, and the Family

Birthing Center. The hospital’s Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) designation means it offers prompt and readily available access to a full range of pediatric medical subspecialties for at-risk newborns. Waterbury Hospital also is a Level II Trauma Center, meaning it treats some of the most critically sick or injured patients in the community, and a designated Primary Stroke Center, where patients with severe stroke symptoms can receive life-saving care. The hospital offers a wide range of quality medical services, including minimally invasive, robotic-assisted surgical procedures, a state-of-the-art interventional radiology suite, and a new cardiac catheterization lab and hybrid operating room (OR), where interventional cardiologists and cardiovascular surgeons perform advanced cardiovascular and other cardiac procedures.

Additionally, Waterbury Hospital serves as a teaching hospital for Yale School of Medicine, Quinnipiac University Frank H. Netter M.D. School of Medicine, and several other academic institutions, training the next generation of physicians, nurses, and other health care providers through undergraduate and residency medical education programs.



Patricia Gentil, COO

“We’re not a typical community hospital. We offer a lot of very sophisticated services, like open-heart surgeries and complex vascular procedures,” said Patricia Gentil, the hospital’s



“We’re not a typical community hospital. We offer a lot of very sophisticated services, like open-heart surgeries and complex vascular procedures. While we’re big enough to offer these kinds of advanced clinical services, we’re still small enough to be a place where everybody knows your name.”

Chief Operating Officer (COO). “But we’re also just the right size. While we’re big enough to offer these kinds of advanced clinical services, we’re still small enough to be a place where everybody knows your name. And that feels good.”

“Many of our nurses are people who have grown up in our community and have gone into nursing in order to be able to provide care for their family and friends,” said David Schmidt, RN, MSN, the hospital’s Chief Nursing Officer (CNO). “There’s a tight connection between our nursing staff and our community, and that’s something you don’t always get at a larger hospital. Our nurses have a great sense of pride in Waterbury Hospital.”

The hospital – the second-largest employer in Waterbury – is also a powerful economic engine. Many of its 2,100 employees have spent decades working at the facility; many also live in the community and rely on the hospital for their own health care. Gentil, who was born at Waterbury Hospital, has worked there for more than

20 years; it’s her second job out of college. Both of her children were also born at the hospital.

“This is my home. It’s my community,” she said. “I care deeply for Waterbury Hospital and for the people who work here.”

David Pizzuto, MD, an internal medicine specialist who serves as Chief Medical Officer of Prospect Connecticut Medical Foundation, has been affiliated with Waterbury Hospital for 39 years. Dr. Pizzuto has himself been a patient at the hospital – twice having surgery there.

“Waterbury Hospital is a very good facility; there’s high-quality medicine practiced there. The physicians, nurses, and ancillary staff are excellent,” he said. “One of the things I like about Waterbury Hospital is that no matter if you’re the President of the United States or the average citizen, you get treated the same – and that’s the way health care should be.”

A Story of Two Cancer Patients

surgery to shrink the tumor. After that, Dr. Zhang used Waterbury Hospital’s advanced robotic-assisted da Vinci Xi Surgical System to perform minimally invasive surgery to successfully remove the tumor. Post-surgery, Phyllis underwent another round of chemotherapy to destroy any remaining cancer cells.



Then, about a year after Phyllis’s surgery, Maria noticed symptoms of her own, including what looked like blood in her stool.

“Maria came to my office saying, ‘I have the same symptoms as Phyllis,’” Dr. Zhang recalled. “That was a surprise. I felt like maybe it was not real. We know that the most common cause of rectal bleeding is hemorrhoids.”

A colonoscopy, however, confirmed that Maria, too, had stage 3 rectal cancer. “It was very scary,” Maria said. “I thought I was going to die. My whole life flashed before me.”

In many ways, Phyllis Ferrara and Maria Lagasse are opposites. Phyllis tends to be low key and a little more laid back. Maria wears her heart on her sleeve.

One of the unusual things that binds the two friends together, however, is a shared diagnosis of stage 3 rectal cancer. And thanks to John Zhang, MD, a colorectal and general surgeon at Waterbury Hospital, both women share a remarkable recovery from the disease.

Phyllis was the first to notice that something was wrong. There was blood in the toilet bowl when she went to the bathroom. But she downplayed her symptoms to Maria. “I begged her to go to the doctor, but she waited,” Maria recalled. “Then, one day, she said to me, ‘I can’t live like this anymore. I need to go to the doctor.’”

A colonoscopy revealed that Phyllis had rectal cancer. Dr. Zhang and the hospital’s multidisciplinary care team treated her with neoadjuvant chemoradiation, a standard therapy for locally advanced rectal cancer, in which chemotherapy and radiation therapy are performed prior to

Dr. Zhang treated Maria the same way he treated Phyllis, using neoadjuvant chemoradiation to shrink her tumor. “Maria responded very well to the treatment,” he said. “The tumor almost disappeared.”

Today, the two friends remain profoundly grateful to their caregivers and to the hospital for giving them both a second chance at life.

“I can’t say enough wonderful things about Waterbury Hospital – from the staff in the OR and, of course, Dr. Zhang and his staff, to the nurses,” said Maria. “I know it sounds so strange, but, for a horrible situation, I had such a wonderful experience. So much empathy – from the moment I woke up until I left to go home, I just felt very special. I would never go anywhere else.”



John Zhang, MD

Phyllis echoed her friend’s sentiments. “I would never go to any other doctor for that kind of surgery than Dr. Zhang,” she said. “He told me when I was first diagnosed that he was going to fix me, take care of me, and I would be fine. He’s a great surgeon. He puts you at ease, gives you confidence that you’re going to get through this. I feel that he definitely saved my life.”

Physician Groups Provide Quality, Comprehensive Primary and Specialty Care

Waterbury HEALTH's comprehensive network of primary care providers and specialty physicians is the backbone of the health care system in the Greater Waterbury area.

Two major employed physician groups affiliated with the system – Alliance Medical Group (AMG) and Cardiology Associates of Greater Waterbury (CAGW) – supply many of the doctors and other providers who deliver primary care and specialty medical services to the communities served by both Waterbury Hospital and the system's outpatient clinics and doctor's offices.

AMG is a large multidisciplinary medical group that includes approximately 110 providers – mostly physicians, but also some nurse practitioners – in the Waterbury area. The group offers experienced primary care/internal medicine physicians who focus on treating adults – from teen years through the end of life. Some of these internists have additional training in various subspecialties, including cardiology and geriatrics. Additionally, medical group physicians provide pediatric primary health care for children and adolescents. Others specialize in behavioral health care services. AMG specialty physicians also serve as hospitalists at Waterbury Hospital, managing the clinical care of inpatients at the facility.

"Alliance Medical Group has all the elements to provide comprehensive care to patients throughout our community," said Dr. Lundbye, Waterbury HEALTH's President and CEO. "Their highly trained primary care providers are focused on maintaining people's health – not just on treating them after they get sick."

David Pizzuto, MD, who serves as Chief Medical Officer of Prospect Connecticut Medical Foundation, the entity that owns AMG, CAGW, and ECHN Medical Group in Manchester, said AMG provides critical health care services in the greater Waterbury area.



David Pizzuto, MD

**Alliance
Medical Group**
Waterbury HEALTH

**Cardiology
Associates**
Waterbury HEALTH

"AMG offers the services the community needs," Dr. Pizzuto said. "Many physicians in private practice don't accept Medicaid because the reimbursement it provides doesn't support the finances of their practice. The AMG physicians, as part of the Foundation, don't have to worry about that because we accept Medicaid and all other payor sources, as well as people who have no insurance. Every patient gets access to the same high-quality services."

CAGW is a seven-member cardiology group formed in 2011. Its multidisciplinary team of experienced cardiac specialists employs a proactive, patient-centered, evidence-based approach for prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart disease at the practice's Waterbury location as well as at Waterbury Hospital.

"Cardiology Associates of Greater Waterbury is our marquee program. They're the dominant cardiology group in the greater Waterbury area," said Dr. Lundbye. "They take very good care of our patients, providing non-invasive and invasive procedures to treat heart disease, including advanced procedures like TAVR (transcatheter aortic valve replacement). When a patient comes in at 2 a.m. with heart attack symptoms, they're the specialists who are on call to come in and perform an emergency angioplasty as quickly as possible. With them, members

of our community don't have to travel out of this area for high-level cardiac care."

According to Dr. Pizzuto, Prospect's investment since 2016 in provider recruitment, new locations, and additional services has enabled AMG to expand to better meet the health care needs of the Waterbury community. The company has also made significant investments in enhancing cardiac care at Waterbury Hospital, including the addition of a brand-new state-of-the-art hybrid OR.

Coordinating Patient Care to Improve Quality and Reduce Costs



duplication of services and medical errors and reducing costs.

The ACO benefits from the expertise and experience in population health management that Prospect has brought since acquiring Waterbury HEALTH. Prospect's

Alliance Medical Group physicians are key participants in a Prospect-driven initiative to improve quality and reduce the cost of care for a group of 4,299 Medicare-only patients in the greater Waterbury area.

Care for these patients is provided by AMG physicians through Prospect's Accountable Care Organization (ACO) in Connecticut as part of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Medicare Shared Savings Program. Shared Savings Program ACOs are groups of doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers who collaborate to give coordinated, high-quality care to people with Medicare, focusing on delivering the right care at the right time, while avoiding unnecessary

Coordinated Regional Care (CRC) model, which the company has implemented in all its markets, emphasizes collaboration among physicians, affiliated medical groups and medical practices, in partnership with health plans, to give patients highly coordinated, personalized care. The model helps ensure that people receive the right primary, specialty, and follow-up care when they really need it, in the most appropriate setting, whether that's a doctor's office, an outpatient clinic, a hospital, or in a patient's home.

"CRC's cornerstone is the 'Triple Aim' of health care – health (improving quality and health outcomes for a defined population), care (patient- and family-centered care that is seamless and integrated) and cost

(managing the cost of providing care for the population). These are the same goals as the ACO," said Dr. Pizzuto, who serves as Chair of the ACO Board.

He added, "As the ACO, we are held accountable for meeting certain quality measures. This includes, for example, making sure that when patients are discharged from the hospital they're provided with follow-up care within seven to 14 days to prevent readmission. Others quality initiatives we focus on include such things as making sure that female patients get annual mammograms, that all patients get regular colonoscopies as well as flu and pneumonia vaccines, and that diabetic patients' A1C (blood sugar) levels are appropriate. By taking this coordinated approach, quality of care is no longer piecemeal."

Dr. Pizzuto also serves as Board Chair of Prospect's Independent Practice Association in Connecticut, which supports physicians in private practice who provide care for approximately 50,000 patients covered by commercial insurance and Medicare Advantage health plans in the greater Waterbury and Manchester areas.

Investment in Waterbury HEALTH's Patients, Physicians, and People



da Vinci robotic-assisted surgery system

Two new da Vinci Xi robotic-assisted surgical systems that allow surgeons to perform advanced minimally invasive procedures such as colorectal and orthopedic surgeries. A brand-new, state-of-the-art interventional radiology suite where physicians use cutting-edge imaging technology to diagnose and treat patients, including for liver cancer and prostate conditions. A new cardiac catheterization lab and hybrid operating room (OR), one of the most sophisticated in the state of Connecticut, where Waterbury Hospital interventional cardiologists and cardiovascular surgeons perform a wide range of cardiovascular and other procedures.

“These investments in advanced medical technology have brought a level of sophistication to Waterbury Hospital that is typically found only in major health care centers.”

More than \$56.6 million in capital has been invested in Waterbury HEALTH over the last six years, including substantial funding for new medical technologies,

equipment, and services designed to expand and improve patient care and save lives.

“These investments in advanced medical technology have brought a level of sophistication to Waterbury Hospital that is typically found only in major health care centers,” said Justin Lundbye, MD, Waterbury HEALTH’s President and CEO. “With the addition of this new technology, we can do more of these complex procedures like TAVR so people in our community don’t have to leave town to get high-level care. We have the technology, the talent of our medical staff, and the ability to provide our patients quality care with almost every procedure they need, right here in Waterbury.”

Other essential medical equipment and technology that has been added or replaced includes OR lights, surgical equipment, microscopes, a nuclear medicine camera, anesthesia machines, defibrillators, and fetal monitors. Capital investment also has enabled the expansion of services, including women’s health, wound care, urology, cardiovascular, geriatrics, and behavioral health.

“These investments have helped us to become a better caring place, because we have had to acquire the knowledge and skills to go along with the new technology,” said Schmidt, the hospital’s CNO. “The investment in advanced technology keeps our staff on the cutting edge of the highest standards of care.”

Another significant portion of the financial investment has gone into upgrading the hospital’s physical plant. Many of the investment dollars are in areas that aren’t immediately noticeable to the public such as expenditures on infrastructure that had long been neglected prior to the change in ownership in 2016, according to Gentil, the hospital’s COO.

“When Prospect came in, Waterbury Hospital was losing approximately \$20 million a year and we were starved of capital,” Gentil said. “With Prospect’s investments in



The trauma and fracture service team

our physicians, our people, and our physical plant, we were able to stabilize our finances, grow our services, and improve the care we provide to our community.”

Other investments made in Waterbury HEALTH that have benefited patients and the community served by

the health network include more than \$36.4 million in charity or other uncompensated care for people who were underinsured, uninsured or otherwise unable to pay in full for the care they received. Another major investment is the almost \$16.7 million Prospect has contributed to the employee pension fund since 2016.

“These investments have helped us to become a better caring place, because we have had to acquire the knowledge and skills to go along with the new technology.”

New Technology Enables Life-Saving Heart Valve Replacement Procedure

As we age, our heart ages and we become more at risk of developing aortic valve stenosis, or narrowing of the aortic valve, the main valve between the heart and the rest of the body.

This very common degenerative disease can result in a calcified aortic valve that is unable to fully open, reducing blood flow from the heart. The condition leaves patients feeling constantly fatigued, with symptoms of chest pain, shortness of breath and fainting, which affects both their quality of life and their survival. Symptomatic severe aortic stenosis is associated with high mortality rates.

"A decade ago, the only option for fixing the aortic valve was open-heart surgery," explained Ehsan Ansari, MD, a board-certified cardiologist at Waterbury Hospital and member of Cardiology Associates of Greater Waterbury. "For many patients with co-morbidities, this option was not available,

and for those who were able to have the procedure, it meant longer hospital stays and longer recovery time. Fortunately for these patients, advanced technology has made it possible to have a life-changing procedure with less discomfort and shorter recovery time."

Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR), a minimally invasive cardiac procedure to replace the heart valve, is performed in Waterbury Hospital's new hybrid OR, using state-of-the-art technology. Waterbury Hospital is the only hospital in greater Waterbury to offer this life-saving procedure.

The technology allows physicians to guide a replacement valve through a catheter into the patient's heart via a small incision in the patient's groin. The physician performs the procedure while the patient's heart is still beating, using X-ray and echocardiography images projected on a computer screen as a guide. Traditional aortic valve replacement requires open-heart surgery, which involves stopping the patient's heart and placing them on an artificial heart-lung machine while the physician cuts through their breastbone to gain access to the heart.

"The beauty of the TAVR procedure is that patients are able to go home sooner and return to normal life within days, not months," said Dr. Ansari. "There's less morbidity with the TAVR procedure and less pain because you don't have to crack the patient's chest wide open. Until now, we had no option to help people who were too ill to undergo open-heart surgery. With TAVR, we have an opportunity to help these patients live longer and have a better quality of life. And most importantly, we're now able to treat them with this advanced procedure right here in Waterbury, close to their home."



Ehsan Ansari, MD, and the Interventional Cardiology team

Heart Attack Survivor: From EMT to Patient in a Heartbeat

This past August, Rob Swercewski had just finished a 10-mile mountain bike ride and was meeting his wife and friends at the town green for a concert. Moments after setting up his lawn chair, he knew something wasn't right. He felt a tightness in his chest and was too weak to sit up. Friends nearby noticed that he looked pale and was sweating heavily.

Swercewski, an emergency medical technician with Beacon Hose Company No. 1 in Beacon Falls, recognized the symptoms and feared he was having a heart attack. As a first responder, he had taken care of many heart attack patients before.

After 911 was called, the Beacon Hose Company ambulance and crew arrived within minutes. "They did an ECG on me right there in the chair," he recalled. "I remember the look on their faces. They showed me the (ECG) strip and I knew."

The ECG indicated that he was having an ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), a type of heart attack – also known as a "widowmaker" – that



Rob Swercewski

tends to be more severe and more dangerous than other heart attacks. Time was of the essence. The ambulance crew transmitted the ECG to Waterbury Hospital's Emergency Department from the scene and rushed Swercewski to the hospital.

He was given emergency care and cardiac monitoring during the ambulance ride. At the hospital, he was taken to the

cardiac catheterization lab where it was determined that his heart's left anterior descending artery was 100 percent blocked.

During the 90 minutes Swercewski spent in the cath lab, the interventional cardiology team performed a balloon angioplasty to restore blood flow to his artery, then inserted stents (tiny mesh tubes) to prevent the artery from closing again. Following the procedure, his color returned and he began feeling better.

After a day and a half in the hospital, Swercewski was discharged with orders to follow up with Arslan Johnghar, MD, at Cardiology Associates of Greater Waterbury.

After a few weeks of monitoring and some new medication, he is back to saving lives and performing his normal physical activities.

"Being on the receiving end of emergency care was quite an eye opener," said Swercewski. "I'm grateful to my fellow EMS responders and to the staff at Waterbury Hospital for saving my life."

A Relentless Focus on Quality and Patient Safety



Patients who receive a urinary catheter during their stay at Waterbury Hospital are given specially focused attention and care.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 75 percent of urinary tract infections (UTIs) acquired in a hospital are associated with these types of catheters – narrow tubes that are inserted into the patient’s bladder through the urethra to drain urine. The most important risk factor for developing a catheter-associated UTI, or CAUTI, is prolonged use of a urinary catheter. For that reason, the CDC recommends the devices only be used when medically necessary and removed as soon as they are no longer needed.

UTIs, like many infections acquired in a hospital setting, can be difficult to treat and have serious health consequences for patients. That’s why Waterbury Hospital maintains a relentless focus on preventing CAUTIs, as well as other hospital-acquired infections (HAIs) such as central line-associated bloodstream infections

(CLABSIs) and clostridium difficile (C. diff), a bacterial infection.

“Preventing HAIs is one of our highest priorities throughout our entire organization, and we’ve seen tremendous improvement in our infection rates in all three of these areas,” said Gina Spatafore, RN, the hospital’s Director of Performance Improvement. Spatafore oversees the hospital’s programs and initiatives designed to enhance quality of care and patient safety.

To reduce the incidence of the three infections, the Waterbury Hospital clinical staff follows evidence-based practice standards that are memorialized in playbooks created specifically for each of the three conditions. The playbooks – developed by the hospital’s infection control specialists and infectious disease physicians in collaboration with Prospect’s quality and patient safety team – offer prescribed, research-based protocols for appropriately utilizing, maintaining, and cleaning catheters.

“The processes we’ve put in place have helped our staff to be much more diligent about the use of these catheters, including removing them in a timely manner once they’re no longer necessary,” said Dr. Lundbye. “We’ve been able to improve patient safety at Waterbury Hospital as well as the whole patient experience.”

These improvements are a testament to the nursing staff’s deep commitment to continually enhancing quality of care and patient safety, according to Schmidt, the hospital’s CNO. “Our nurses hold quality very, very close to their hearts,” he said. “The amount of work they do every day to make sure our patients receive safe, quality care is just outstanding.”



Gina Spatafore, RN,
Director of
Performance
Improvement

To ensure patient safety remains the first priority for every Waterbury Hospital staff member, more than 40 leadership team members and department representatives start the day with a hospital-wide safety huddle. The meeting is designed to review

the previous 24 hours for any safety issues that may need to be addressed, while looking ahead to the next 24 hours to try to anticipate any potential safety concerns. Daily safety huddles are also held in every clinical department. In the Nursing Department, every shift has a daily safety huddle.

Any HAIs or safety events that do occur are thoroughly reviewed and analyzed by a multidisciplinary team and corrective action is taken to help prevent recurrences. The hospital has robust data reporting and clinical data analytics to help measure and improve its performance on quality and patient safety.

Other quality initiatives in place at Waterbury Hospital include the implementation of evidence-based strategies to reduce patient falls. These strategies, which are included in a playbook the hospital is developing with Prospect, have proven effective in helping reduce the number of falls at Waterbury Hospital to below the national benchmark for falls per 1,000 patient days. Initiatives also have been implemented to address sepsis,

including evidence-based protocols that help clinicians identify and treat high-risk patients in a timely manner, which is imperative to saving lives.

Spatafore’s Performance Improvement team also continually reviews cardiac patient outcomes data to help determine whether evidence-based best practices are being followed and to identify any areas where improvement is needed. The results of the review are presented to the physicians and staff on the hospital’s award-winning cardiac care team to help ensure continuous quality improvement. “Our goal is to make sure we are providing the best care and outcomes for our patients,” Spatafore said.

Another successful quality improvement initiative has helped prevent medication errors by focusing on the consistent and timely use of scanning technology by the nursing staff to ensure the barcode on the patient’s wristband matches the one on the patient’s medication. “By ensuring the right patient receives the right medication at the right time, the chances of medication errors have been greatly reduced,” said Schmidt.

Awards and Distinctions

- **2022-23 High-Performing Hospital in three procedures by US News & World Report**
- **Coronary Intervention Excellence Award™ by Healthgrades**
- **Named in Top 10 percent in the Nation for Coronary Intervention Procedures by Healthgrades**
- **Five-Star Recipient for Treatment of Heart Attack by Healthgrades**
- **2021 recognition by the American College of Cardiology in the “Best Hospitals” edition of US News & World Report for its dedication to cardiovascular patients**
- **American Heart Association’s GoldPlus Get With The Guidelines-- Stroke Gold Plus with Target and Type 2 Diabetes Honor Roll quality achievements**
- **Mission Liveline ST-Elevated Myocardial Infarction (STEMI)-Receiving Center Gold designation by the American Heart Association**
- **Best Hospital in Greater Waterbury by Waterbury Observer**
- **Award for Organizational Excellence by the Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce Healthcare Council**
- **38 physicians named as “Top Doctors” by Connecticut Magazine**
- **Trauma Level II services recertification in 2022**
- **City Service Award by Waterbury Neighborhood Council**
- **Comprehensive Bariatric Center accreditation by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program**
- **Recognized as a Breastfeeding-Friendly Employer by the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition**

Zero Harm: The Goal of High Reliability

The guiding principle behind all Waterbury HEALTH's quality and patient safety efforts is an ongoing initiative to maintain the system as a High Reliability Organization (HRO). HRO, which is practiced at all Prospect hospitals, is an operational approach derived from industries like air travel and nuclear power that have stringent safety measures in place to avoid catastrophic accidents.

In health care, HRO emphasizes zero harm in any patient interaction. At Waterbury Hospital, all clinical and support staff are trained in the six HRO safety behaviors: speaking up if they have any concerns about safety, communicating accurately, staying focused on their work, having a questioning attitude and accepting being questioned themselves, listening to patients with empathy, and working together as a team.

"We've been a High Reliability Organization since 2014 and HRO continues to be the model for safety throughout our organization – not just for direct care providers, but for every employee in every department," said Spatafore.

HRO's emphasis on empowering staff members to speak up if they feel patient safety is being compromised is key to its success, according to Schmidt. "HRO has increased the layers of safety checks that hospitals have in place when they perform procedure on patients," he said. "HRO

teaches you that anyone – from a doctor or a nurse to a PCA (personal care assistant) or a lab worker – can say, 'Hold on, let's take another look to make sure this is the right procedure for this patient.' There's no doubt that HRO has saved lives."

As part of their orientation process, every new hire at Waterbury Hospital is required to complete a two-hour HRO training. In addition, over the last two years, virtually all the hospital's leadership team members have been trained in HRO.



Nurses Stephanie Tomasheski and Dorinda Maurice

"Everyone at Waterbury Hospital, including every member of the medical staff, is committed to HRO."

To help maintain the focus on HRO, an online training session is held every year to reiterate to staff the importance of the six safety behaviors. And every month, a safety habit of the month is presented at the hospital-wide safety huddle and then disseminated at the department huddles. "We focus on that one safety habit for the month," Spatafore explained. "We also have safety coaches throughout the hospital who promote the safety behaviors and bring back any safety stories that are then shared at the huddles."

"One of the things we've added to our focus on HRO is a mandate that every member of our medical staff, even if they're not employed by the hospital, go through HRO training," said Dr. Lundbye. "We want them to be able to speak the language of HRO and be part of the DNA of safety at Waterbury Hospital."

He added, "Everyone at Waterbury Hospital, including every member of the medical staff, is committed to HRO."

Rising to Meet the Challenge of COVID-19

On March 8, 2020, Gov. Ned Lamont announced Connecticut's first confirmed COVID-19 case.

Five days later, Waterbury Hospital opened a drive-through COVID-19 testing station, only the second such site in the state. By then, according to the Governor's Office, the number of confirmed cases in Connecticut had risen to 11.

"We got the drive-through testing site up and approved by the state Department of Health within 18 hours," said Justin Lundbye, MD, Waterbury HEALTH's President and CEO. "We recognized early in the pandemic the need to rapidly increase the numbers of people being tested in our community so we could speed up diagnoses and the implementation of preventive measures. Creating the drive-through site also was a way to protect our staff and uninfected patients by limiting their potential exposure to the virus."

Dr. Lundbye, who was Waterbury Hospital's Chief Medical Officer at that time, took charge of the hospital's 24/7 pandemic response. This included establishing a COVID-19 Incident Command Center to help guide the hospital's operations during the pandemic. To handle the significant influx of COVID-19 patients in the first weeks and months, the hospital set up temporary tents where people could be tested before entering the emergency department (ED), as well more than 30 negative pressure isolation rooms inside the building where patients could be treated more safely.

The hospital team also focused intensely on procuring and distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical equipment, such as ventilators, and making sure care teams had uninterrupted access to clinical and other information and services needed to care for patients.



"I can't speak more highly of our staff who were in the trenches during COVID. Many have husbands and wives and children at home, but they responded in the best possible way to care for our patients."

To help with the need for additional staffing caused by the surge in confirmed cases, physicians and other personnel were redirected from the health system's outpatient clinics to treat patients in the hospital. When elective surgeries were discontinued due to the pandemic, operating



Long-term COVID patient leaves the hospital



Mayor N. Warren "Pete" Hess at vaccine clinic

room nurses were reassigned to inpatient medical units. A surgical post-anesthesia care unit was quickly converted into an additional intensive care unit. Some administrative personnel with medical backgrounds were also given clinical roles, including the hospital's Director of Performance Improvement, Gina Spatafore, an RN

with many years of nursing experience earlier in her career.

"I hadn't been at the bedside for about five years, but I went and worked on the floor," she said. "My role was more about helping the staff, not caring for patients. It was a frightening time, but it was also very rewarding to me to be able to support my colleagues and to be on the cutting edge of developing new policies and ways to care for COVID patients."

Waterbury Hospital treated its first COVID-19 patient on March 18, 2020. To date, the hospital's physicians, nurses, and other staff members have cared for more than 1,900 confirmed COVID patients. At the peak of the pandemic, nearly 80 hospitalized patients infected with the virus were being treated every day.

"I can't speak more highly of our staff who were in the trenches during COVID," said David Podell, MD, PhD, the hospital's Chair of Medicine. "Our physicians, residents, nurses, and ancillary staff were amazing. Many have husbands and wives and children at home, but they responded in the best possible way to care for our patients, especially during the terrible situation early on when none of us knew where things were going to end up."

When the COVID-19 vaccines became available, Waterbury Hospital again acted quickly to help protect the community. In collaboration with Post University, the hospital opened a drive-through vaccination site at the university's campus in January 2021. The hospital also worked with the Borough of Naugatuck to open another drive-through clinic that operated at a

Undiminished Commitment to the Community

The pandemic has had a significant negative impact on almost every hospital system in the country, and Waterbury HEALTH is no exception. Despite the enormous operational and financial challenges resulting from COVID-19, the health system has remained committed to its patients, staff, and community throughout the global health crisis.

Early in the pandemic, Prospect focused its supply chain efforts on ensuring Waterbury Hospital employees, physicians, and patients had the PPE needed to keep them safe. The company even chartered a cargo plane from Malaysia to get PPE to the bedside for clinical staff. Prospect also purchased lifesaving medical equipment such as high-flow ventilators and expanded the number of negative air flow beds at the hospitals to help them cope with the surge in COVID-positive patients.



"We were one of the only hospitals in Connecticut that never ran out of PPE," said Dr. Lundbye.

"If Waterbury Hospital had not had Prospect's purchasing power behind us, I'm not sure how we would have fared during the pandemic," said Dr. Pizzuto.

Being part of a national health care network had other advantages. Physician leaders at Prospect hospitals across the country held weekly and bi-weekly video calls to share best practices and develop new policies and protocols for treating COVID-19 and protecting staff and patients.

town-owned facility five days a week for months.

"The partnership with Waterbury Hospital was amazing," said Borough of Naugatuck Mayor N. Warren "Pete" Hess. "When I asked them to help set up one of the first municipal vaccine clinics in the state, there was no hesitation. It was incredible."

At the two mass vaccination sites and at dozens of walk-up

clinics throughout the area, Waterbury Hospital staff gave more than 65,000 doses of vaccine to community residents.

Dr. Lundbye's leadership during the pandemic earned him the 2020 Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce Healthcare Council Leadership Award, as well as the praise of his colleagues. "Dr. Lundbye was incredibly effective in keeping the hospital afloat at that time," said Dr. Podell.

"The partnership with Waterbury Hospital was amazing. When I asked them to help set up one of the first municipal vaccine clinics in the state, there was no hesitation. It was incredible."

Training Future Physicians and Other Providers



David Podell, MD, PhD

Waterbury Hospital has a long-standing tradition of training the next generation of physicians and other health care providers. This more than 50-year-old commitment to providing high-quality medical education continues today.

Waterbury Hospital offers several highly competitive residency programs for physicians who have already earned their medical degrees and are now training in a specialty. A total of 36 physician-residents are enrolled in the Yale-New Haven Hospital/Waterbury Hospital Internal Medicine Residency Program to be trained and board certified in internal medicine. Ten residents are enrolled in each year of the three-year program.

“The fact that we have these academic teaching programs at Waterbury Hospital is an indication that there’s a level of clinical sophistication here that goes beyond what a community hospital typically offers.”

An additional six residents complete a preliminary year residency program in general medicine before going on to train in various subspecialties, including dermatology, radiology, neurology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, and anesthesiology.

Established in 1947, the General Surgery Residency Program at Waterbury Hospital has been sponsored by the Quinnipiac University Frank H. Netter M.D. School of Medicine since 2019. The 12 residents enrolled in the program routinely get experience in ear, nose and throat, plastic, vascular, and thoracic surgeries, as well as in some urology, orthopedic, and gynecological surgery cases. Waterbury Hospital also offers a clinical Pharmacy

Residency Program that makes available two resident positions each year.

In addition to providing residency programs for new physicians seeking specialty training, Waterbury Hospital serves as a teaching hospital for both Quinnipiac University and the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. Students studying to become physicians and physician assistants (PAs) at the two universities can complete all required clinical rotations at Waterbury Hospital during the third and fourth year of medical school. Approximately 50 medical and PA students from the two schools rotated through the hospital during the last academic year.

“The fact that we have these academic teaching programs at Waterbury Hospital is an indication that there’s a level of clinical sophistication here that goes beyond what a community hospital typically offers,” said Dr. Lundbye, Waterbury HEALTH’s President and CEO and a Clinical Professor at Quinnipiac University.

David Podell, MD, PhD, a board-certified rheumatologist who serves as the hospital’s Chair of Medicine, oversees the Yale-New Haven Hospital/Waterbury Hospital Internal Medicine Residency Program. A Clinical Professor of Medicine at both Yale University School of Medicine and at Quinnipiac University, Dr. Podell has taught internal medicine residents and medical students at Waterbury Hospital for about 30 years.

The medical education programs have had a significant positive impact, not just on the participating residents and students, but also on the hospital and the community, he said. “Many of our graduates have gone on to assume leadership roles at Yale and other medical institutions, including nationally. Many of our faculty members present their research and scholarly work at national and international medical societies, giving recognition to Waterbury Hospital both here and abroad. And in the years since I’ve been here, approximately 90 physicians who trained at this hospital are now practicing in the community.”

The on-campus presence of medical students and residents elevates the quality of care at teaching hospitals



Residency program physicians in training

“This collaboration between the experienced and the young is very gratifying. It’s universal at every teaching institution. We learn from one other, and we teach one other. It creates a great learning environment.”

by challenging the faculty and attending physicians to maintain a rigorous academic and training environment, according to Dr. Podell.

"I've been involved in the education of young doctors all my life," he said. "They're right out of medical school and very knowledgeable and current in their thinking. To that, our faculty brings our years of experience in patient care. This collaboration between the experienced and the young is very gratifying. It's universal at every teaching institution. We learn from one other, and we teach one other. It creates a great learning environment."

Waterbury HEALTH's Physician-Leaders Walk the Talk

One day a month, Justin Lundbye, MD, takes time away from his multiple administrative duties as CEO of Waterbury HEALTH to do what he has done for more than 20 years – treat patients.

A cardiologist and internal medicine physician by training, Dr. Lundbye continues to see patients every month at the Henry S. Chase Outpatient Center in Waterbury. The center, which has offered primary health care services for over 75 years, mostly cares for patients with Medicare and Medicaid or who have no insurance.

"I have a very small practice; I primarily see indigent patients," Dr. Lundbye explained. "It's a way for me to remain engaged in the clinical part of health care that I trained so long for. I don't need to do it but I feel it's important to have direct contact with patients so I can understand how they interact with our health system and how they perceive us. It helps me see the whole picture. I also think it gives me credibility with our other physicians to know that I walk the talk."

Other physician-leaders at Waterbury HEALTH carry out their administrative responsibilities while also continuing to practice medicine or teach new physicians. As Chief Medical Officer of the hospital, Dr.

In addition to its undergraduate medical education and residency programs, Waterbury Hospital maintains academic affiliations with Yale New Haven Children's Hospital, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, and Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital for Cancer and Allied Diseases. Physicians at those institutions provide specialized clinical services at Waterbury Hospital.

Waterbury Hospital also has clinical nursing affiliations with more than 20 colleges and universities, including Yale University, Quinnipiac University, Southern Connecticut State University, Northwestern Connecticut Community College, and Naugatuck Valley Community College.

Lundbye lectured to students enrolled in the hospital's undergraduate medical education program before he was named CEO. "I enjoy teaching too," he said. "It really lifts you up. Medical students' brains are primed to absorb everything, so you have to be at the top of your game to stay one step ahead of them."

David Pizzuto, MD, continues to practice medicine despite his multiple roles as Chief Medical Officer of Prospect Connecticut Medical Foundation, the Alliance Medical Group and the ECHN Medical Group. He also serves as Board Chair of Prospect's Medicare Shared Savings Accountable Care Organization and the company's Independent Practice Association in Connecticut.

"I feel it's important to have direct contact with patients so I can understand how they interact with our health system and how they perceive us. It helps me see the whole picture."

"I've never given up treating patients," said Dr. Pizzuto, an internal medicine specialist in Waterbury for 39 years. "It's something I really enjoy doing. I also like working with all the high-quality physicians in the Waterbury community. I believe they respect you more as an administrator when they see you still working in the trenches alongside them."

Community Care for the Most Vulnerable



Leslie Swiderski

Homelessness.
Mental illness.
Substance abuse.
People living with these conditions are among the most difficult patients to treat. Too often, they fall between the cracks in the health care system.

The Greater Waterbury Health

Partnership's (GWHP) Community Care Team was created a little over two years ago specifically to improve the health and well-being of this growing, often chronically ill sub-set of patients. Although few in number compared to the overall population, these patients are among the most frequent users of local hospitals' emergency departments (EDs). Since they typically do not have access to primary care services, their illness is often more severe and more difficult to manage by the time they are seen in the ED.

The Community Care Team is made up of more than 40 social service and health care providers in the greater Waterbury area – including staff from Waterbury Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital, StayWell Health Center, and the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services – who meet weekly to provide case management and coordinated care for these highly vulnerable individuals. In its first year in operation, the team cared for 12 patients. Currently, as it begins its third year, there are 50 patients enrolled in the program – with many more in the community needing its services.

The impetus behind the program is the recognition that it's impossible to improve the health of homeless, mentally ill patients without addressing the many other issues that greatly impact their well-being. "Clearly, if you're suffering from hunger and homelessness, you can't really control anything else in your life, including your health," said Leslie Swiderski, the GWHP's Associate Director of Case Management.

Christine Belanger, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and consultant with GWHP, is part of the Community Care Team. "When patients identified as homeless, with mental health and substance abuse issues, come into our program, they are intensely case managed," Belanger said. "We pair them with primary care providers. We go with them to their doctor's appointments; we make sure they get there by arranging transportation. We ensure our clients are getting their medications, and if needed, we connect them with services to ensure they are taking their medications correctly. We also help connect clients to services for housing, food, and income, if necessary. By helping them access the social services they need, we can address the social determinants of health that cause them to fall through the cracks."

The GWHP, the region's first health partnership of clinical and community providers, was founded in 2013 by a group of nonprofit community leaders. Since its acquisition by Prospect in 2016, Waterbury Hospital has continued to be a key participant in the partnership. In addition to helping fund the GWHP, the hospital provides office space at its campus for the program. The collaboration with the GWHP is just one of many outreach programs that the hospital participates in, helping it stay closely connected to the community it serves.

"Waterbury Hospital is very supportive of what we do – more than any other institution," Swiderski said. "Prospect



has worked very hard to adapt to the community. They're very community-oriented and they continue to encourage and support home-grown programs like ours."

"This program really represents the cutting edge of community care in the state of Connecticut, and we are proud to be a part of it," said Dr. Lundbye, Waterbury HEALTH's President and CEO. "We have a large number of patients in our community who don't have access to health care or are just establishing access for the first time. At Waterbury Hospital, we care for everybody who comes through our doors. That's really what we're all about: We don't leave anybody behind."

While the Community Care Team focuses on helping mentally ill, homeless patients, the GWHP's Waterbury Health Access Program (WHAP) – founded in 2003 –

continues to combine the expertise of clinical and non-clinical case managers and social workers to provide access to care for low-income and uninsured people in Waterbury. WHAP's highly trained, bilingual staff helps residents enroll in medical insurance, find primary or specialty care, apply for free or low-cost prescription drug programs, or access free health services donated by community providers.

In addition to providing services at locations throughout the city of

Waterbury, WHAP staff members are embedded in the EDs at Waterbury Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital, where they help connect uninsured patients with insurance coverage, as well as with social services such as housing and transportation after they're discharged. "We assist them with these basic needs to help make sure that their health becomes a priority once they leave the hospital," Swiderski said.

"At Waterbury Hospital, we care for everybody who comes through our doors. That's really what we're all about: We don't leave anybody behind."

Other Community Programs and Partnerships

Be Well Bus

Transportation to medical appointments for patients from Waterbury and 11 surrounding towns funded entirely by Waterbury HEALTH

Homeless Outreach Program

Partnership with St. Vincent DePaul Mission, Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries, Salvation Army, and Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury to connect homeless people with services and resources

City of Waterbury Overdose Technicians Team

Collaboration to provide support for patients struggling with opioid use disorder and connect overdose survivors with resources

Waterbury Health Club

Organization offering wellness programming and socializing opportunities for over 15,000 members of all ages

Peer Recovery Specialist Program

Support in the ED for patients presenting with a drug- or alcohol-related crisis, including linkage to community resources post-discharge

Senior Center Outreach

Programs include wellness fairs and informational talks by providers or staff about disease prevention and services available to area patients

Youth Program Exposes Inner-City Kids to Career Opportunities

This past summer, Eriana Washington realized her career goals were changing. The 19-year-old business administration major at Waterbury's Post University aspires to be an entrepreneur, however, her main focus now is to give back to the youth in her community by becoming an elementary school health and physical education teacher.

Her career switch was influenced by the time she spent as a teacher in the Youth Pipeline Initiative's Summer Bridge Program at Waterbury Hospital. Each year, in partnership with Waterbury Public Schools, the hospital offers a comprehensive six-week program for mostly inner-city middle and high school students that includes a rigorous educational curriculum as well as life skills training and exposure to career opportunities through field trips and tours of the hospital's departments. After a one-year break due to COVID-19, the program resumed in 2021 with 15 student participants.

"I love teaching, but for a long time I didn't want to be a schoolteacher. I was never really interested in the medical field either," explained Washington, a life-long Waterbury resident whose first experience with the Youth Pipeline Initiative was as a participant in a one-week spring break program just for middle schoolers in 2017. "Returning to work as a



Eriana Washington

teacher in the Summer Bridge Program this year made me realize that I am definitely interested in health education and how that information is being provided to children, especially in inner-city schools."

The Summer Bridge Program is one of the Youth Pipeline Initiative's focus areas. The initiative, which Waterbury Hospital helps fund, was established in 2001 with the mission of closing the achievement gap for local minority and economically disadvantaged students so they can compete for placement in post-secondary education programs in preparation for careers in health care. In addition to providing programs for kids, the initiative also offers civics leadership and family development training for adults as well as courses to help parents advocate effectively for their school-age children. Waterbury Hospital hosts the state's only Albanian-language family development program to better serve the growing Albanian population in the area.

For Washington, the Youth Pipeline Initiative's programs for local middle and high school students provide critical life and career exposure that they might not otherwise get. "These programs are so important," she said. "They expose students to things they're not going to be exposed to in the school system or even by their parents. The programs have definitely contributed to my outlook on life."



Participants in the Youth Pipeline Summer Bridge program

Why I Chose Waterbury HEALTH

"I'm proud to work here because we have such excellent staff that works incredibly hard to take care of our patients on a daily basis. We also have wonderful physicians and providers who take wonderful care of our patients. But most importantly, the culture here is second to none."

– **Justin Lundbye, MD, President and CEO, Waterbury HEALTH**

"The best part of working here for me is the people, my colleagues and fellow employees. We work together as a team to get the job done."

– **Cherae Bogues, Patient Access Manager**

"In 1971, I was diagnosed with an extremely rare heart disease. The doctors and the staff at this hospital saved my life. I lived in the old pediatric ward for a whole year in an oxygen tank and, since then, I've had a love for this hospital, the doctors, and the nurses. That's why I decided this is where I want to get a little old and this is where I want to spend the rest of my days working."

– **Dave Dugan, Materials Management Service Representative**

"I started at Waterbury Hospital in 2015 and have been working as a nurse in Family Birthing since February 2020. My favorite part about working at Waterbury Hospital is the staff. They are my second family. I feel comfortable asking questions because we're a cohesive team."

– **Brina Yanes, RN, Family Birthing Center**

"Waterbury Hospital has helped me grow as a nurse. I started here right out of school and have been here for two years. I love my colleagues, manager, and my patients. I love what I do because I can bring a smile to my patients every day."

– **Kristy Veizaj, RN, Medical-Surgical**

Our Locations

Hospital

Waterbury Hospital
64 Robbins Street
Waterbury, CT 06708

Outpatient Centers and Locations

**Waterbury HEALTH
Outpatient Behavioral Health**
88 Grandview Avenue
Waterbury, CT 06708

Chase Outpatient Center
160 Robbins Street
Waterbury, CT 06708

Waterbury Surgery Center
1312 W Main St.
Waterbury, CT 06708

Cardiology Associates
455 Chase Parkway
Waterbury, CT 06708

**Greater Waterbury
Imaging Center**
68 Robbins Street
Waterbury, CT 06708

VNA Health at Home
365 Main Street
Waterbury, CT 06708

**The Harold Leever
Regional Cancer Center**
1075 Chase Parkway
Waterbury, CT 06708

Scoville Medical Group
1389 W. Main Street
Waterbury, CT 06708

Alliance Medical Group
at Middlebury Edge
1625 Straits Turnpike
Waterbury, CT 06708
~ and 13 other locations
throughout greater Waterbury

Access Rehab Centers
22 Tompkins Street
Waterbury, CT 06708
~ and 10 other locations
throughout greater Waterbury

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