



# Community Health Needs Assessment 2021 Progress Report



This report contains data collected by Gaylord staff and compiled by the Public Relations Department to address the progress of the initiatives established in the triennial 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment.

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To read the full plan or any of the following, [click here](#) for the 2019 CHNA & Implementation Plan:

- Inventory of Services
- Community Gaylord Serves
- Rational, Research and Survey Findings

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- ABI - Acquired brain injury
- ACMA - American Case Management Association
- ALS - Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis
- BITS - Bioness Integrated Technology Systems
- CARF - Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities
- CHEFA Grant - Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority Grant
- COPD - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- CVA - Cerebrovascular accident/stroke
- Stratus Interpreter – Online healthcare interpretation services
- MCI - Mild cognitive impairment
- MS - Multiple sclerosis
- SCI - Spinal cord injury
- TBI - Traumatic brain injury
- USOC - United States Olympic Committee

## ABOUT GAYLORD

Gaylord Specialty Healthcare is a rehabilitation-focused, nonprofit health system that provides inpatient and outpatient care for people at every point in their journey from illness or injury to maximum recovery.

Gaylord Hospital provides medical rehabilitation for acute illnesses, accidents and complex medical conditions. Licensed as a long-term acute care hospital, Gaylord Hospital fills a critical gap in the continuum of care by serving patients with complex medical needs who require hospitalization and rehabilitation for an extended period – on average 25+ days. Gaylord Outpatient Services offers nearly 30 programs for a wide range of conditions, focusing mainly on neurologic diagnoses, with specialized technology and staff with advanced training to meet the needs of these patients. Gaylord Physical Therapy provides orthopedic rehabilitation services for recovery from surgery, injury, sports-related injury and other medical conditions.

Together, these entities deliver a complete continuum of rehabilitation care driven by technology, research, clinical experience and human compassion. Headquartered in Wallingford, Connecticut, Gaylord serves a mix of local, regional, national and international patients.

As a nonprofit institution, Gaylord is governed by a Board of Directors, which meets six times a year and whose members are not compensated. Several standing Board committees oversee the operations of the system, including Budget & Finance, Audit, Nominating, Investment, Joint Conference, Development and Human Resources. Our Executive Committee annually assesses the performance of our Chief Executive Officer based upon her stated goals.

## LOCATIONS

Gaylord Hospital  
50 Gaylord Farm Road, Wallingford, CT 06492

Gaylord Outpatient Services  
50 Gaylord Farm Road, Wallingford, CT 06492

Gaylord Physical Therapy  
1154 Highland Avenue, Cheshire, CT 06492

Gaylord Physical Therapy  
8 Devine Street, North Haven, CT 06473

Gaylord Physical Therapy  
50 Berlin Road, Cromwell, CT 06416

## ACCREDITATIONS AND EXPERTISE

Areas of expertise include:

- **Spinal Cord Injury** – By creating personalized treatment plans to maximize physical and emotional recovery from spinal cord dysfunction caused by disease or injury, Gaylord restores independence through rehabilitation and support, which may occur by using inpatient and or outpatient care led by a physiatrist.
- **Brain Injury** – Offering one of the most comprehensive brain injury treatment and rehabilitation programs in the Northeast, intervention often begins in the hospital setting, followed by an on-campus transitional living center and to a robust series of outpatient services.
- **Stroke Recovery** – Patients receive an individualized care plan to rehabilitate a wide range of impairments including partial paralysis, speech loss, swallowing and visual deficits. Survivors may participate in the transitional living center and utilize our extensive options in outpatient rehabilitation as well as support group options.
- **Neurological Rehabilitation** – Gaylord’s specialized care team treats patients suffering from many neurological disorders including amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), muscular dystrophy, Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), multiple sclerosis (MS), post-COVID syndrome and others.
- **Orthopedic Rehabilitation** – Specialists treat musculoskeletal problems for patients following major multiple trauma, amputations, joint replacements, fractures and arthritis to restore movement.
- **Pulmonary Program** – Led by a board-certified pulmonologist this team offers exceptional care to those experiencing COPD, interstitial lung disease, pulmonary fibrosis and other respiratory diseases. Hospital staff care for patients in need of ventilator weaning and offer an educational program for families that want to bring a loved one home still dependent on the ventilator. Respiratory patients seeking better health are provided exercise programs and disease-specific education to conserve energy and manage their illness.
- **Complex Medical Conditions** – Patients with organ transplants, requiring extensive wound care, experiencing complications following surgery, diagnosed with congestive heart failure or other cardiac complications can benefit from the hospitalist-led medical team at Gaylord.

**Areas of specialty accreditation include:**

Gaylord is a member of the **Spaulding New England Regional Spinal Cord Center**, which is one of 14 Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems in the U.S.

**The Joint Commission** accreditation and certification is recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality that reflects an organization’s commitment to meeting certain performance standards. Each organization must go through a rigorous evaluation process. Accreditation and certification last for three years.

Gaylord is the only long-term acute care hospital (LTACH) in the country accredited by **Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)** for inpatient and outpatient programs. Gaylord is one of only two facilities in the world with three CARF subspecialty accreditations in stroke, traumatic brain injury and spinal cord in this licensure category.

#### **Areas of special designation related to technology:**

Gaylord was the first facility in Connecticut with an **Ekso bionic exoskeleton**. The Ekso enables people experiencing paralysis to walk, and has logged over a million steps by patients at Gaylord in Wallingford.

Gaylord is one of only 18 facilities nationwide, including adult and pediatric facilities, to be designated a **Center of Excellence for the Passy-Muir speaking valve**, which allows patients with a tracheostomy tube to speak.

Gaylord was the first in the nation to be designated a **Center of Excellence for expertise using Vapotherm technology**. Vapotherm delivers heated humidified air to ventilator-dependent patients improving respiratory outcomes. Gaylord is a leader in technology and works with Vapotherm to set the standards for the designation of other hospitals as a Center of Excellence.

Gaylord is the only organization in the state with the **ZeroG Gait and Balance System**. This gait robot is designed to protect patients from falls while providing dynamic body-weight support for walking, balancing, sit-to-stand maneuvers and even stairs. Because ZeroG is mounted to an overhead track, there are no barriers between the patient and therapist and inpatients can begin rehabilitation as early as possible in a safe, controlled environment.

The **Bioness Integrated Therapy SYSTEM (BITS)** touchscreen has multiple interactive program options that challenge stroke and brain injury patients to use visual motor activities, visual and auditory processing, cognitive skills and endurance training. BITS is a multi-disciplinary therapy solution designed to motivate patients and improve clinician efficiency with 24 unique programs and four standardized assessments. Gaylord has three units in use with patients on the Wallingford campus, including the only bedside unit in the state.

For more information on additional accreditations and technology in use, please visit **Gaylord.org** and use the search function.

## **MISSION, VISION AND VALUES**

- Mission – To enhance health, maximize function and transform lives.
- Vision – To be a recognized and acknowledged destination for rehabilitation and complex medical care providing high-quality, patient-centered, compassionate, team-based healing at every point in the journey from illness or injury to maximum recovery.
- Values – Clinical excellence, compassion, integrity, respect, accountability and a commitment to safety.

**Work Force**

Gaylord employees: 925, which is the equivalent of 665 FTEs

Average tenure of employees: 7.7 years

**Financials**

Net annual revenues in fiscal year end 2020  
\$88,488,480

Net annual revenues in fiscal year end 2021  
\$91,936,331

**Patients and Visits**

Outpatient locations: 4

Inpatients served FY20: 1,426

Outpatients served FY20: 6,450  
*(lower than expected due to the pandemic)*

Inpatients served FY21: 1,424

Outpatients served FY21: 7,650

**Licensed inpatient beds on Wallingford, Conn. campus:** 137. Typically staffed for 121, soon to be 122.  
*(Cannot staff the full complement due to staffing shortages and construction.)*

**Number of states/countries represented by inpatient population in the last two years:** 20

**Number of inpatient services offered:** 45

**Number of outpatient services offered:** 33

**Number of referring hospitals for inpatients:** 45

**Patient Satisfaction:** 97.5%  
Using Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction scores of 4s + 5s which are the top two indicators of satisfaction.

**SUMMARY OF 2021**

The normal challenges to providing healthcare services in a typical year paled in comparison to the challenges presented while serving patients during year two of a pandemic. The arrival of the coronavirus in the United States changed the delivery of patient care and typical interactions with patients and families for another 12 months.

Gaylord continues to be creative and flexible with the models of patient care provided in 2021 and remains optimistic about 2022. Gaylord's healthcare teams demonstrated their unique ability to adjust quickly to the demands of a pandemic, providing outstanding outcomes for all the patients. The images of joyous reunions between patient and their families after weeks or months of separation sustained tired staff. The opportunities to create even deeper relationships as staff became "family" to so many in this time of crisis softened the constant request to pivot, change direction and almost as soon as any routine was established, all were challenged to pivot again.

Gaylord continued to

use telemedicine and teletherapy as needed. Gaylord's main campus and all satellites remained open in 2021 with hours extended and volumes decreased to maintain social distancing and follow all CDC precautions. Gaylord is in planning stages for opening a fifth physical therapy location in March or April of 2022 on the CT shoreline. Leadership continually made changes to keep staff and patients safe and well cared for. A "Share the Care" grassroots program was started where administrative staff would help with non-clinical duties on the inpatient units to help decrease the workload as staffing shortages became more prevalent.



### **A reflection of the CHNA initiatives determined in 2019:**

While identified initiatives continued to be pushed forward as much as possible, some areas continued to be placed on hold due to the challenge of in-person care and safety while social distancing. As a healthcare system that banded together to serve more patients than were served in 2020 with safety as the highest priority, we proudly report the following progress of our 2019 CHNA and Implementation Plan with this progress update for 2021.

### **Priority 1: Brain Health and Mild Cognitive Impairment programming**

Brain health refers to the ability to remember, learn, play, concentrate and maintain a clear, active mind. It's being able to draw on the strengths of your brain—information management, logic, judgment, perspective and wisdom. Brain health is all about making the most of your brain and helping reduce some risks to it as you age.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Strategies to address this need from 2019 CHNA:**

- 1) Gaylord is beginning to foster a relationship with the Mayo Clinic to replicate their HABIT program at Gaylord, which provides intervention for Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI). We are going to send a neuropsychologist out to the Mayo Clinic to receive MCI training. This training will expand the types of patients that Gaylord serves from those with major concussions or brain injuries to those with mild cognitive impairment and dementia. This program will also have physical activity as well as nutrition components.
- 2) Investigate and look to implement additional screening evaluations and programming for patients who are required to, or voluntarily wish to, gather more information about their mental capacity.
- 3) Increase the availability of pediatric and adult neuropsychology services to meet the demand in the community.

#### **Anticipated impact:**

- Establish additional programs for better patient care.
- Share the information with referring providers for more coordinated care.
- Increase the number of patients utilizing the psychology department each year.

#### **2021 Strategy Updates:**

- 1) A Gaylord neuropsychologist has been trained by the Mayo Clinic staff to administer the Healthy Action to Benefit Independence & Thinking® (HABIT) program designed to equip older adults with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) to compensate for losses and develop healthier habits to slow the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://brainhealth.nia.nih.gov/>

progression of the disease. The launch of this program was delayed when the pandemic reduced neuropsychology staffing and caused a reallocation of staff hours to cover COVID–related needs. HABIT is a group-based model, with 20 people per group, including caregivers. As of November 2021, Gaylord continues to adhere to DPH mandates regarding social distancing and group size, preventing the offering of the program anytime in the immediate future.

- 2) The need for neuropsychological screenings for pilots as mandated by the regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been identified as a population for Gaylord to serve. Supplies have been ordered and a staff member is prepared to administer the screenings beginning in the spring of 2022.
- 3) During FY2021 the psychology department provided 2,455 outpatient visits. This represents an increase of 20% over FY2019 visits- numbers represent pediatric and adult initial evaluations and follow-up appointments.

## **Priority 2: Expand healthcare options for those involved in workplace injuries**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows a large volume of work-related injuries. Gaylord seeks to expand its staff and capabilities to address the high demand by providing quality care and excellent outcomes. Injured workers currently benefit from the technology and staff expertise already in place at Gaylord.

### **Strategies to address this need from 2019 CHNA:**

- 1) Establish dedicated programs for inpatients and outpatients who require specialized resources to help them through the workers' compensation system.
- 2) Contract a physician specialist available to see injured workers.
- 3) Use a trained care manager to interact with the insurance companies, worker compensation liaisons/adjustors, lawyers, etc.
- 4) Integrate the use of rehab technology to expedite the recovery of the patients using Gaylord's programs.
- 5) Communicate the scope of the services to appropriate audiences.

### **Anticipated Impact:**

- Increase the number of patients able to access rehab services for work-related injuries.
- Help workers return to any type of work status, including full-time, part-time or per diem.
- Provide clinical speakers to interested audiences who have relationships with decisions makers in the worker's compensation fields to facilitate care options.



**2021 Strategy Updates:**

- 1) Gaylord has built a dedicated team to address the needs of the injured worker and others involved in their care including acute care hospital staff, insurance carriers, employer, patient and family. The Gaylord staff makes themselves available to answer questions and align clinical needs across the Gaylord continuum. Gaylord provides coordinated, individually managed, team-based, rehabilitative and complex medical care for injured workers' in inpatient and outpatient areas. In 2021, Gaylord treated 26% more patients in the outpatient setting than in 2020. For additional program outcomes, click here: <https://www.gaylord.org/Patients-Families/Conditions-Services/Workers-Compensation>
  
- 2) As of January 1, 2021, Jerrold Kaplan, MD was promoted to the position of medical director of outpatient services and inpatient and outpatient workers' compensation cases. Gaylord expanded the care management team in 2020 in order to provide robust supervision to patients in the injured workers program. A dedicated outpatient care manager with clinical training as a certified occupational therapist assistant joined the team established by a registered nurse, who now focuses on inpatient care management. Both staff report to Dr. Kaplan and work as a team to achieve the best treatment protocols and pathways for communication, efficiency and superior patient outcomes.
  
- 3) By using trained care managers to interact with the insurance companies, worker compensation liaisons/adjusters, lawyers, etc. they have established trust with adjusters and nurse case managers' facilitating the injured worker's progress toward achieving goals of treatment and return to work. An example in 2021, Gaylord introduced a new Work Conditioning Program offered specifically to injured workers. This program was designed to help provide a safe and successful return to work and uses a progressive conditioning program based on the injured worker's specific job tasks. Depending on the patients' capabilities, they may participate in three to four hours of therapy per day, three days a week, over four to six weeks. The program can follow or work in tandem with traditional rehab and establishes short and long-term goals that are specific to job tasks. Treatment oversight includes a physiatrist, care manager, physical therapy team that includes a conditioning specialist and the weekly update from this team is shared with the authorized representative from the workers' insurance carrier. This program has been highly successful and has a waiting list for patients to be able to participate in it.
  
- 4) To differentiate Gaylord's program, the use of advanced rehabilitation technology continues to be a priority. From offering use of tablets with the latest rehab-focused apps to high-end robotic technology, intellectual and financial investments are made yearly by Gaylord to continue improving the program to facilitate patient recovery. A few noteworthy pieces of rehab tech are:

- a. The Ekso® Bionic exoskeleton, or Ekso, is a portable, adjustable bionic suit designed to help patients with lower-extremity paralysis or weakness, resulting from a spinal cord injury, stroke or other neurological condition, to stand and walk.
- b. The ZeroG® Gait and Balance System protects patients from falls while providing dynamic body-weight support as patients practice walking, balance tasks, sit-to-stand maneuvers and even stairs. Only available in CT at Gaylord.
- c. AlterG® Anti-Gravity treadmills use NASA-developed Differential Air Pressure (DAP) technology that enables unprecedented unweighting therapy and training capabilities. This unique unweighting with air pressure comfortably lifts the user and allows him/her to walk or run at a fraction of their body weight.

A recent study completed by Gaylord's Milne Institute for Healthcare Innovation found that the Body Weight Support Systems (BWSS), specifically the ZeroG TRiP system, improved patients' balance. According to the study, "the BWSS-P positively impacted the balance performance of a subset of stroke inpatients who scored greater than or equal to 21 on their BBS assessment" (Hrdlicka, 2021). The BBS assessment (Berg Balance Scale) is an assessment used to measure a person's balance, and will also determine if they are a low, moderate or high fall risk. [Read more here.](#)

- 5) Communications with referral sources, potential patients and legislators are delivered in the form of press releases on new staff appointments and purchases of technology and an [annual report](#) on the outcomes of the patients in the injured worker program.

Treating injured workers is what we specialize in. The 2020 Gaylord Inpatient and Outpatient Clinical Outcome report states 97.2% of workers' compensation inpatients were discharged back to the community. For FY2021, this success rate increased to 100%. If someone is admitted to Gaylord with a work-related injury, they have an excellent chance of returning to work and back to their lives.

The team has also begun to send injured worker program information via email to contacts to share outcomes, white papers and treatment options to this targeted audience.

### **Priority 3: Pulmonary/COPD rehabilitation, ventilation weaning and caregiver training**

Gaylord has the expertise and resources to not only wean patients from the vent but to teach the patient's caregivers how to care for them while on the vent. Our clinical staff has identified the need for a program to explain the magnitude of the responsibility of taking a loved one home on a vent. Gaylord will endeavor to create a video-based program to teach caregivers about the various challenges of taking someone home on a vent and provide a realistic and helpful account of what is needed.

**Strategies to address this need from 2019 CHNA:**

- 1) In 2019, Gaylord applied for a grant from CHEFA to create a video about educating caregivers on the responsibilities of caring for someone on a ventilator. The purpose of these videos will be to better prepare patients and family members that are considering being discharged on a ventilator. This is an underserved educational need.
- 2) Gaylord will track the number of caregivers who watch the video.
- 3) To improve general pulmonary care, Gaylord is continuing to investigate increasing outpatient space for the pulmonary program.
- 4) Gaylord will continue to offer outpatient pulmonology physicians onsite to see patients

**Anticipated impact:**

- Gaylord will make the vent videos public and share them with other healthcare systems. The Admissions staff experience barriers when it comes to insurance case managers approving a Gaylord stay for vent-dependent patients. These videos will be used to attempt to educate the insurance industry on the value of vent caregiver teaching.
- All patients being considered for vent admissions will be given the opportunity to watch the video series as it will increase their knowledge about the methods used to care for their loved one while at Gaylord Hospital.

**2021 Strategy Updates:**

- 1) A series of three videos was created to educate audiences in need of realistic, detailed information for taking home a loved one on a ventilator. The videos are serving to educate those in the insurance industry, those in acute care hospitals, patients and caregivers. The vent videos were uploaded to YouTube on November 19, 2019, as previously reported in the 2020 CHIP.
- 2) In an effort to serve as wide a community as possible the video series was placed on YouTube. This placement was convenient for potential Gaylord patients and their caregivers to watch and learn and provided worldwide access to critical information that is not well represented for this population.

The numbers below represent views from referral sources, patients and loved ones from November 2019-October 2021. The overwhelming increase in views demonstrates a continued need for this type of education and healthcare service.

- Vent Program Video 1- Ventilator Care at Gaylord: Viewed 4.3K times  
-230% increase in views over 2020
- Vent Program Video 2- Training Caregivers: 6K views  
- 400% increase in views over 2020

- Vent Program Video 3- Preparing the Home: 2.9K views
  - 45% increase in views over 2020
- 3) Gaylord's Outpatient Rehabilitation Program secured a donation to be used to refresh and enlarge the space where outpatient pulmonary services are delivered. The larger space allowed an additional class session for exercise and education to be offered every nine weeks, as reported in the 2020 CHIP update. During the summer of 2021, the outpatient pulmonary rehab staff offered an evening session to benefit post-COVID patients who were experiencing long-haul symptoms. With this additional space and evening session, Gaylord's Outpatient Rehabilitation Program was able to treat 135 patients for a total of 1,468 visits. Another increase in session offerings continues to be investigated with the ongoing pandemic.
- 4) Gaylord Outpatient Medical Services trialed offering sleep physicians' services in the Wallingford, CT location for 6 months. The volumes for sleep-related issues for patients with a pulmonary diagnosis using the practice were deemed not large enough to continue the model. We are currently investigating a new model for providing these services while maintaining a relationship with the previous physicians and using their current office locations for patient care when referrals are needed.

### COVID-19 Update

COVID was not on the radar of healthcare providers during the establishment of the CHNA in 2019. However, when the pandemic hit the US in March of 2020, many providers, such as Gaylord, changed treatment models and began caring for COVID patients. As of October 2021, Gaylord Specialty Healthcare had successfully discharged more than 350 COVID-19 patients, many of them of who were on ventilators, required tracheostomy care and oxygen.

Patients and families continue to rely on Gaylord to provide a continuum of care related to post-COVID concerns. Whether inpatient care, outpatient care, a support group or community education, Gaylord dedicates hundreds of hours to physical recovery, cognitive well-being and the ability to return to a higher level of functioning. A reunion was offered on the Wallingford campus in July of 2021 to participants in its COVID support group. This created a safe space for COVID survivors to meet in-person and share their stories of survival and triumph with each other, as well as be reunited with caregivers.

#### **Priority #4: Provide wellness lectures and access to adaptive sports opportunities**

As a nonprofit healthcare system, Gaylord strives to provide educational opportunities and wellness programming to our community, from school-aged children through senior citizens. By arming the community with the latest research on health conditions and how to avoid risky behaviors, we hope to build a stronger, healthier tomorrow. Our community's members often reach out via our website "Contact Us" form looking for resources. By continuing to inform them where and when to seek help, we can build a stronger relationship. Educational opportunities include the ThinkFirst program, rehab technology updates, how to better exercise, avoid falls, increase balance and how to slow the process of osteoporosis to name a few.

##### **Strategies for implementation:**

- 1) Provide community lectures on topics related to Gaylord Outpatient Services and Gaylord Physical Therapy offerings.
- 2) Partner with local YMCAs, community employers, Chamber of Commerce, etc. to provide education.
- 3) Build relationships with sports clubs, teams, schools, etc. to allow Gaylord Physical Therapy staff to interact with local youth groups to encourage active living.
- 4) Provide support to the Gaylord Sports Association (adaptive recreational and competitive sports) for their programs to be expanded upon.

##### **Anticipated impact:**

- Maintain our relationship with the community as a trusted healthcare resource in central Connecticut.
- Increase the physical benefits, social opportunities, independence and skill enhancement for those we serve.

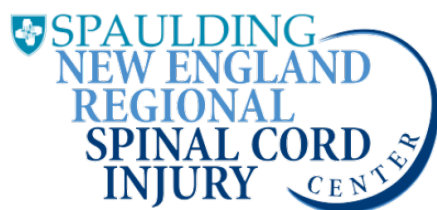
##### **2021 Strategy Update**

- 1) Due to COVID-19, most events continue to be presented virtually, via Zoom. Some topics that our staff has covered include Fall Prevention, Osteoporosis, Preparing your Body for the Golf Season, and Air Quality & Lung Health. Gaylord slowly began to transition back into the community for in-person presentations. Some of the topics we presented were the Benefits of Stretching and the annual Diabetes Management seminar. As of October 2021, Gaylord held 19 presentations, either in person and virtual, with an average of 19 people attending each presentation.
- 2) Gaylord partnered with many organizations in 2021 to reach a wider audience and help community members to stay connected during this difficult time. Partners included Chesprocott Health District,

the Russell Library, the Wallingford Library, as well as the Cromwell and Cheshire Senior Centers to name a few.

- 3) In 2021, similarly to 2020, restrictions from schools and sporting leagues made for difficulty in supporting and interacting with students via sport and school organizations. Gaylord did make financial contributions to various community teams and activities in an effort to keep healthy activities running. Any team or club whose sport or activity was postponed will have Gaylord's support when the restrictions are lifted.

In 2021, Gaylord Physical Therapy was able to connect with the Connecticut Grind travel baseball team in Orange, CT. Andrew McIsaac PT, DPT, presented an arm health presentation via Zoom to more than 50 players and coaches. He also connected with the Athlete Training Institute, which is a multi-sport training facility in Cromwell, CT to provide materials on arm health for pitchers with plans to speak to their players in the near future.



Gaylord was the first in the country to earn this distinction.

**References from full 2019 CHNA**

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