

Below is a synopsis of the goals established for Gaylord Specialty Healthcare's 2017 Community Health Needs Assessment. After conducting reviews and evaluating resources (process detailed in the 2017 report), Gaylord focused on three main areas: COPD, stroke and wellness.

Community Health Priority Need #1: COPD - Address the growing epidemic of COPD through community partnerships, education, support and programming.

Supporting Gaylord's COPD patient population is important because of the many implications. COPD can limit physical activity leading to other health issues and potential social isolation. According to the CT DPH, in 2014, adults with disabilities had more than four times the risk of COPD than those without.¹ In 2017, the prevalence of COPD among adults in the state was 5.7 percent and the age-adjusted prevalence was 5.1 percent. While these values are slightly greater than the 2015 respective rates of 5.1 percent and 4.5 percent, the crude COPD prevalence is still lower than that of the nation (6.4 percent).²

2019 update: Via partnership with the Wallingford Department of Health and Masonicare, Gaylord implemented four main strategies to achieve this goal in a project called *Healthy Wallingford 2020*. Despite low attendance at project meetings, this collaboration consisted of several outreach components including:

- the creation and distribution of educational flyers throughout the Wallingford community
- presentations at health fairs, senior centers and local YMCAs offering peak flow screenings and disseminating information about COPD, support groups and smoking cessation classes
- instead of developing a YouTube pulmonary education video series for the general population as originally planned, Gaylord shifted focus to reach a smaller population with a critical need – those requiring ventilator support. Observed by Gaylord medical staff and respiratory care team, the need for video education for

¹ <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Health-Education-Management--Surveillance/COPD/Homepage>

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https://nccd.cdc.gov/BRFSSPrevalence/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DPH_BRFSS.ExploreByLocation&rdProcessAction=&SaveFileGenerated=1&rbLocationType=States&isLocation=99&isState=&isCounty=&isClass=CLASS03&isITopic=TOPIC14&isYear=2017&hidLocationType=States&hidLocation=99&hidClass=CLASS03&hidTopic=TOPIC14&hidTopicName=COPD&hidYear=2017&rbShowFootnotes=Show&rdICL-icIIndicators=CHCCOPD1&icIIndicators_rdExpandedCollapsedHistory=&icIIndicators=CHCCOPD1&hidPreviouslySelectedIndicators=&DashboardColumnCount=1&rdShowElementHistory=divTopicUpdating%3dHide%2cisITopic%3dShow%2cdivYearUpdating%3dHide%2cisYear%3dShow%2c&rdScrollX=0&rdScrollY=275&rdRnd=18649

taking a loved one home with ventilator support was needed. Gaylord applied for and was awarded a grant to create a video series addressing the requirements of caring for a family member at home while on a ventilator. The goal was to begin using the videos August 2019, to better prepare patients and family members that are considering taking a loved one home on a ventilator. This is an widely underserved educational need. A survey by a staff pulmonologist found no other video resource currently available which explained the physical, mental and logistical needs of preparing to bring a person who requires ventilation into a home setting. A three part series was created and as of spring 2020, the videos had been viewed approximately 2,400 times.

- On the inpatient side, Gaylord's care management department continues to follow up pulmonary patient's 3-5 days after discharge via phone call to validate adherence and understanding of the patient's discharge plan and to ascertain if there are any concerns. Issues are then referred back to the appropriate clinical liaison.

Gaylord staff presented education to the community and attended over 25 health fairs in 2019. Gaylord has begun to survey attendees to see what they found most helpful and what they would be interested in for future talks. The surveys are offered on paper and via electronic distribution. In addition, all the local senior centers received information to post about support groups offered for all diagnosis by Gaylord staff and are invited to health and wellness talks offered in the geographic proximity.

Additionally, to expand services for COPD, Gaylord outpatient pulmonary rehab program expanded its hours in 2016 - 2017. Class offerings increased from 3 classes per week to 4 classes per week. The space for pulmonary outpatient exercise and education was determined to require a larger physical footprint, so plans were draw up for expansion. The construction was completed in October 2019 and the space allows for a larger number of patients to be served. This change allows an accommodation or 24 patients in classes per week compared to the previous space allowing 18 patients per week.

The final component of this strategy was to expand support groups. The Gaylord pulmonary support group called, Better Breathers, has expanded from 10 to 20 regular attendees compared to practically no regular attendees prior to these efforts. Gaylord's efforts have increased to serve a larger geographic area, with members coming from Walingford and surrounding towns.

Community Health Priority Need #2: Stroke - Improve inpatient direct care and educate stroke patients and providers about the continuum of care.

Supporting stroke patients was identified as a priority area since strokes often lead to damaged brain tissue which could affect many aspects of daily living, including movement and cognition. Gaylord adapted a two-pronged approach to reach this goal, specifically improving delivery of care and educating patients and providers.

2019 update: Delivery of care was improved in the following ways:

- In 2017 - 2018, Gaylord's patient care units were reorganized, allowing stroke patients to be cohorted on one unit — a change reflective of clinical best practices and resulting in a more coordinated delivery of care.
- In addition, the Gaylord community now has increased access to various assistive technologies. Three BITS (Bioness Integrated Therapy System) machines that help people regain important skills like hand-eye coordination, visual reaction time and memory were purchased. One ZeroG and three AlterG machines were purchased as well. These machines make the process of relearning to walk easier and safer for patients.
- In 2019, telemetry was expanded into two additional patient care areas so that clinicians can more closely monitor cardiac function, utilize referring hospital protocols and insure the best outcomes for stroke patients.
- Finally, Gaylord maintains their CARF accreditation, which is reviewed for continued accreditation every three years, for their inpatient and outpatient programs. The accreditation is voluntary and assures that all systems of care are held to a higher standard regarding protocols for patients and families. Gaylord is also accredited for additional sub-specialty accreditation, specifically the stroke program, and is the only long-term acute care hospital in the state with this specialty accreditation for stroke.

Gaylord also educated patients and providers in various ways:

- Gaylord hosts a community provider group six times a year, comprised of home health agencies, skilled nursing facilities and durable medical equipment providers that cover the state of CT and provide services post-discharge. This allows for sharing of information, data and patient needs that are identified by providers interacting in different levels of patient care.
- Gaylord also hosted a continuing education event for over 75 physicians, therapists, nurses and respiratory care providers from across the state for the First Annual State of CT Stroke Advisory Council Summit in September 2019. Alyse Sicklick, MD, FAAPMR, Gaylord Medical Director for Inpatient Rehabilitation was the presenter.

- A community talk titled “What is a Stroke & How Can I Prevent One?” was presented by a Gaylord physical therapist/site supervisor and the information made available to the public.
- Gaylord gave over 20 presentations about the continuum of care (from acute care -> independent rehab units -> community -> outpatient -> tune-up clinic -> annual visits/follow-up by Gaylord hospital physicians) at more than 12 acute care hospitals, including physicians, case managers and therapists.
- Additionally, Gaylord educated the community on stroke prevention and treatment by sharing our updated CVA manual on the website as a free resource. A monthly support group for the community of stroke survivors and their care givers is offered monthly.
- Gaylord provides a 14-week, ABI and SCI specialist certification courses to increase knowledge not just among providers at Gaylord but also to providers throughout the community. From a general education standpoint, 4 additional CEU events were held on topics ranging from SCI and medically complex patient care in 2018-19.

Community Health Priority Need #3: Wellness - Educate patients and community members about clinical services that will allow them to maintain or increase function and improve quality of life. Focus will be on physical therapy and involvement in adaptive sports.

Being proactive in getting the screenings and/or therapy needed can improve one’s quality of life and lessen personal healthcare costs down the road. Gaylord sought to achieve this goal by providing screenings and education as well as expanding offerings provided by the Gaylord Sports Association, housed at the main campus in Wallingford, CT.

2019 update:

- A schedule was developed to foster collaboration between Gaylord Physical Therapy Orthopedics and Sports Medicine and different community events including 5ks, half marathons and kids fun runs. At these events Gaylord physical therapists seek to educate participants on proper stretching, form and do on-the-spot injury screenings and speak to injury prevention. It is estimated that the therapists educate or stretch over 350 athletes per year at these events.
- Gaylord held numerous community lectures on various issues including dysphagia and how it affects swallowing, stroke prevention, diabetes education, COPD education and fall prevention as a result of partnerships with local senior centers, health districts and YMCAs.

- The geographic footprint of Gaylord's aquatics programs has increased since the aquatics coordinator has been out in the community marketing programs such as Aquasize and PREP (Post Rehab Exercise Program).
- The ThinkFirst program, designed to educate teens about injury prevention by decreasing risk factors (wearing helmets, seat belts, choosing not to take rides from risky friends, and choosing to not use drugs and alcohol) has been actively expanding into the local school system, with 15 schools visited, giving presentations to 88 classrooms, and educating 1,950 children between September 2018-June 2019.
- The Gaylord Sports Association offers the largest adaptive sports program in the state and has seen growth in programs and attendees over the past few years. The program markets to a large geographic area via social media posts, flyers, about 10 newsletters each year (previously 6 per year) and is currently developing a comprehensive outreach plan. There are about 1,600 people on the mailing list that receive notices. Special posts announcing ski trips, yoga classes and surveys are sent out to the community via social media as well. Billboards have been utilized in the Hartford county in addition to the previous years in New Haven county, thus expanding the program's reach.
- The association has partnered with many groups and providers in the area to expand the inclusion of athletes of all abilities including Southern Connecticut State University and Chapter 126, an adaptive gym in Bristol. Gaylord partners with Connecticut Bass Nation for fishing trips, Ti-Trikes, Inc. and other cycling organizations to offer options for the annual Adaptive Cycle Clinic.
- The association has offered several new programs including three Veteran Adaptive Archery Clinics on the Gaylord campus, the inaugural SMASH BOWL Wheelchair Rugby Tournament, and two first-timer rides for newcomers to adaptive cycling.
- Related to fostering growth of the coaching staff to best serve participants, resources are made available for the coaches to pursue level 1 certifications, at minimum, in their respective sports.
- As a result of these efforts, almost 70 percent of people who participate in the Sports Association programs reported an increase in physical benefits, social opportunities, and skill enhancement. As of 2019, there were 15 sports offered,

242 persons served, 210 adaptive sport opportunities were offered, 496 hours of programming and 717 individuals were served over the past 5 years. This represents a 73% increase in participants over the past 6 years. Almost 88 percent of participants reported increase quality of life.