John D’Avella, MD, receives NKF-CT achievement award

John F. D’Avella, MD, received the National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut’s (NKF-CT) James P. Colangelo, MD Achievement Award at its annual meeting in July. Established in 1996, the achievement award is presented annually for “those who through their actions, emulate the work of James P. Colangelo, MD, whose strong leadership style brought enormous growth to the National Kidney Foundation of Connecticut.”

NKF-CT CEO Kim Hathaway said in her presentation of the award that “Dr. D’Avella has been instrumental in improving the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by kidney disease in Connecticut. His commitment to our Foundation and his patients has been extraordinary. As a dedicated and strong leader for the NKF, we are thrilled to present this award to him.”

Dr. D’Avella, a 20-year member of Hartford Hospital medical staff, and in practice with CT Multispecialty Group, serves as chairman of the Board of NKF-CT. He is also on the Governor’s Council of Connecticut, and is a fellow in the American College of Physicians. Dr. D’Avella holds membership in the American Society of Nephrology, American Society of Transplantation and the Renal Physicians Association.

Hartford Hospital improves emergency cardiac care

Patients’ chances of surviving severe heart attacks may be significantly improved

A patient’s chance of surviving a severe heart attack (medically known as a ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction - STEMI) may now be significantly improved, thanks to a newly-organized response system between Hartford Hospital and local paramedics from the AETNA and ASM services. Hartford Hospital is the only hospital in Connecticut that has implemented this advanced technology, which reduces precious time in treatment during the most critical period of a heart attack.

Emergency Percutaneous Coronary Intervention, a procedure to treat the stenotic (narrowed) coronary arteries of the heart, is the optimal and preferred treatment for patients suffering from a STEMI, if performed in a timely manner.

The newly implemented system allows pre-hospital communication between the first responders and Hartford Hospital. First responders will securely transmit pre-hospital ECG data to the Hospital’s Emergency Department, which determines whether the patient is suffering from a STEMI. If the diagnosis is confirmed, the Hospital’s Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory immediately begins preparing for the patient’s arrival so emergency catheter-based intervention can be initiated immediately upon the patient’s arrival, bypassing several delaying steps.

With this multidisciplinary initiative in place, significant time is saved during the critical period of treating a heart attack. The Hospital’s goal is to minimize the time it takes to treat a patient experiencing a cardiac emergency, as each 15-minute segment saved during this period is associated with 6.3 fewer deaths per 1,000 patients, according to the National Registry of Myocardial Infarction.

By acting in parallel rather than in a series of sequential, time intensive steps, the components of the STEMI care system can be optimized to best treat our patients.

This process has already shown some early successes. A patient recently contacted 9-1-1 on a Saturday at approximately 8:00 p.m. When paramedics arrived, they administered an ECG and sent the data to the Hospital’s Emergency Department.
Emergency Cardiac Care, continued from page 3

positive STEMI notification activated the organized response system and the patient was ultimately successfully treated in the Cath Lab, with an outstanding door-to-balloon time of 74 minutes. This successful outcome was made possible by a terrific response from the Cath Lab, the Chest Pain Center, the Emergency Department and EMS.

Putting forth tireless efforts in making this system a reality were doctors Paul Thompson, chief of Cardiology; Raymond McKay, director of Interventional Cardiology Research; Marcin Dada, associate director of the Chest Pain Center; A. Jon Smally, medical director of Emergency Medicine; and Justin B. Lundbye, medical director of Cardiac ICU.

It is important to note that Hartford Hospital already does a better job of treating heart attack patients than the average U.S. hospital, and we expect this system to improve our outcomes even further. Last October, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services reported that Hartford Hospital was one of only 17 hospitals nationwide with a lower-than-expected death rate during severe heart attacks.

Hartford Hospital makes emergency care even safer
New Emergency Pharmacist will ensure safer and more effective medication use

Hartford Hospital is joining only a handful of leading hospitals in the U.S. by adding a pharmacist to the Emergency Department team to increase safety and efficiency. This addition can potentially save hundreds of lives, as a vast majority of medication errors are preventable, as well as millions of dollars each year.

Gabrielle Jacknin, Pharm. D., has been appointed to this position. Her primary responsibilities include reviewing high-risk medication orders, responding to traumas and resuscitations, consulting with doctors and providing patient education regarding prescriptions.

She received a doctor of pharmacy degree at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and completed a residency at the University of Pittsburgh Mercy Hospital.

The emergency pharmacist is a vital, but rare member of an emergency care team, as fewer than one percent of hospitals in the U.S. report including them on their staff, according to a survey in the American Journal of Health-Systems Pharmacy. A recent University of Rochester study revealed that as many as 70 percent of adverse drug effects in emergency departments are preventable. With the addition of an emergency pharmacist, Hartford Hospital is adding another layer of safety in caring for patients, as the pharmacist can help ensure medicines can be safely combined.

“Hartford Hospital is committed to delivering first-class care to our community,” said Jamie Roche, MD, vice president of Patient Safety and Quality at Hartford Hospital. “In doing so, we place the utmost emphasis on safety and quality each and every day, and understand how important these attributes are in an emergency department.”

The emergency department pharmacist has proven to be a resounding success in ensuring patient safety. A recent study in the Emergency Department at Detroit Receiving Hospital, which sees 84,000 patients annually – comparable to the number of patients that Hartford Hospital’s Emergency Department sees each year – concluded that an emergency department pharmacist would prevent as many as 2,600 potentially serious drug reactions each year.

Beyond contributing to quality patient care, the emergency pharmacist has proven to be a cost-effective asset for hospitals. They can suggest more affordable versions of drugs and recommend more cost-effective ways of delivering medication when appropriate, such as providing medication in an oral dosage form rather than the expensive intravenous equivalent. The same study at Detroit Receiving Hospital projected an annual savings for the hospital of approximately $3.1 million due to the pharmacist’s prevention of adverse reactions and recommendations for cost savings.

“We are proud to be one of the first hospitals in New England to add a pharmacist to our emergency department,” said A. Jon Smally, MD, medical director of Emergency Medicine at Hartford Hospital. “Dr. Jacknin will be an integral member of our team, as she will add yet another layer of safety in treating our patients.”

IOL awards, continued from page 13

Olszewski, teacher, Webb School at Bloomfield; Kerry Wittel, psychical education teacher, Webb School at Cheshire and Bloomfield

This award was given by the Connecticut Association of Private Special Education Facilities to school staff members within the association who have made significant contributions to their students and program. Selection is by peer vote.