

IN THIS ISSUE



2008  
HUMANITARIAN  
OF THE YEAR  
VICKIE LUDDY  
PAGE 4



GOLDEN ATTITUDES  
WATERBURY HOSPITAL'S BRIGHTEST  
ATTITUDES REWARDED  
PAGE 6

SEPTEMBER 2008



# UPDATE

THE NEWSLETTER FOR WATERBURY HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES & NETWORK AFFILIATES

## HEART CENTER GRANTED SIX-MONTH EXTENSION

**Thousands Attend Rally to Show Support**

Cheers and applause erupted in a Hartford hearing room last month when the Commissioner of the State Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) granted a request to keep the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury open for at least another six months.

*Continued on page 2*



SPECIAL EDITION



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## Send letters of support to:

**Heart Center of Greater Waterbury**  
P.O. Box 2153  
Waterbury, CT 06722  
www.heartcentergw.org

**Office of Health Care Access**  
*Commissioner Cristine Vogel*  
410 Capitol Avenue  
MS# 13HCA, P.O. Box 340308  
Hartford, CT 06134  
www.ct.gov/ohca

Look for the "Send Feedback" link at the very bottom of the home page.

## Consider sending a copy to:

**Office of the Governor**  
State Capitol  
210 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Reference:**  
**Docket Number 08-31202**

## The Heart Center of Greater Waterbury Saves Lives!

- A clear community need exists for these services
- The Heart Center has achieved high quality standards
- Closing the Heart Center will result in increased preventable deaths in Waterbury
- Every Voice Counts!

"We cannot afford to rest on our laurels because we still have a long road ahead of us and there is much work yet to be done. **It is imperative** that all of us continue to **make our voices heard.**"

- **John Tobin**  
President and CEO,  
Waterbury Hospital

**FROM THE FRONT**, speakers at the August 20th rally to support the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury included **Mary Prybylo**, Chief Operating Officer of Waterbury Hospital; **John Wasik**, a Waterbury Hospital Clinical Engineer and a former Heart Center patient; and **Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal**.

The decision by **Commissioner Cristine Vogel** came after dozens of prominent legislators, hospital officials, Heart Center surgeons and physicians and former Heart Center patients provided passionate testimony about the need to keep critical heart care services in Waterbury. Many of those in the crowd rode to the hearing in buses to make sure their voices were heard. "This is an enormously gratifying moment," said **Loraine Shea**, the Executive Director of the Heart Center, which is operated jointly by Waterbury Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital and the University of Connecticut Health Center John Dempsey Hospital. "We have worked too hard to create a top-notch, quality cardiac care program to have to close our doors now. It would be like stepping back in time, and that would mean a lot of lives lost unnecessarily."

Providing testimony at the August 29th hearing were **Archbishop Henry Mansell**; **Henry Borkowski, MD**; **Paul Preissler, MD**; **David Underhill, MD**; **John Tobin**, President and CEO of Waterbury Hospital; **William Casey**, Interim President and CEO of Saint Mary's Hospital; and **Jim Thornton**, the Hospital Director at the University of Connecticut Health Center John Dempsey Hospital.

After granting the request for a six-month extension, Commissioner Vogel is now reviewing a new Certificate of Need (CON), submitted on September 15th, seeking to keep the Heart Center open on a permanent basis. A public hearing is expected to take place by late October or early November. A decision on whether to make the Heart Center a permanent fixture in the community is expected by January.

"The Commissioner's decision to extend the Heart Center's demonstration project for six months has made the hospitals and community that have worked so hard to support the program, extremely proud of our efforts," said **Joanne Borduas, RN**, who, as Director of Outpatient Services, oversees the cardiology department at Waterbury Hospital.

The people of Greater Waterbury made a huge show of support for the Heart Center, signing more than 6,000 petition letters sent to the OHCA Commissioner. An additional 10,000 have also been signed since the August 29th hearing. Supporters have also urged their state and federal representatives to keep the Center open.

On August 20th, the auditorium at Kennedy High School in Waterbury was transformed into a sea of red T-shirts and Heart Center pins as more than 2,000 people showed up for a spirited rally with the theme of "Keep Our Hearts in the Right Place." The jam-packed audience heard emotional stories from former patients and heated calls for action from leading medical and state government figures, including **Attorney General Richard Blumenthal**.

"I have long supported and worked to achieve this program for effective lifesaving cardiac care, and I pledge a continued fight for it," Blumenthal said. "Waterbury area residents deserve no less than the highly skilled and caring professionals and programs provided by these hospitals during the demonstration period. This heart care program should be made permanent under extraordinary leadership at the hospitals."

**Mary Prybylo**, the Chief Operating Officer for Waterbury Hospital, said the rally was an overwhelming sign that the Heart Center has been carrying out its mission of saving lives.

**RIGHT:**  
**Tom Chute, General Manager of WATR Radio, inspired the crowd as Master of Ceremonies of the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury public rally.**

"Words simply cannot express our gratitude to everyone in the community for the roles they played, both big and small these past weeks, in helping us keep these critical services available," Prybylo said.

The rally was hosted by popular WATR radio talk show personality **Tom Chute**. The crowd cheered especially loudly for the former patients, many of whom might not have been there if not for the Heart Center. **Bill Orsini**, a 29-year-old Naugatuck road worker who had open heart surgery a year before he was married, praised the Heart Center staff for saving his life, as did **John Wasik**, a Waterbury Hospital clinical engineer who had bypass surgery earlier this year. Both received their heart procedures at Waterbury Hospital.

Since the program began three years ago, the Heart Center has performed over 1,800 angioplasties and more than 600 open heart surgeries.



**"This is an enormously gratifying moment. We have worked too hard to create a top-notch, quality cardiac care program to have to close our doors now."**

**- LORAIN SHEA**


Executive Director,  
Heart Center of Greater Waterbury



**ABOVE:** Loraine Shea conducts an interview with Doug Greene, a reporter at NBC 30 TV.

All of the criteria outlined three years ago by OHCA have been met or exceeded with the exception of one: the volume targets for open heart surgery. When the program was first approved by OHCA, the Center was assigned open heart surgery volume targets that were based on research from the year 1975. The Heart Center was not afforded an opportunity to negotiate those numbers. More recent and relevant research indicates that, in fact, the Heart Center's open heart procedure volume is sufficient not only to have a quality program, but an efficient one as well.

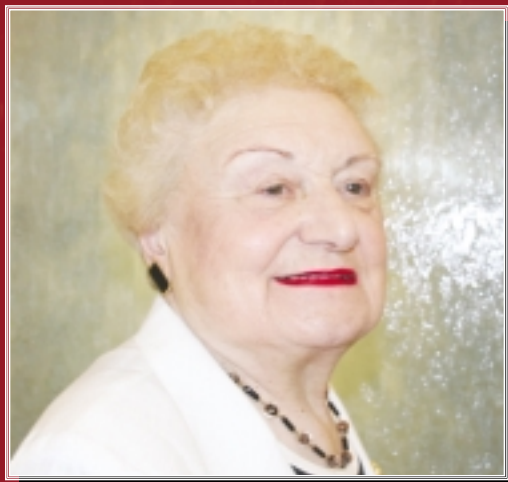
John Tobin said he was pleased that the request for the extension was granted. But he emphasized that he and other advocates will continue to work hard on the Heart Center's behalf to make sure it's ultimately allowed to remain open for years to come (For ways that you can help, see "How you can Help", page 2)

"We cannot afford to rest on our laurels because we still have a long road ahead of us and there is much work yet to be done," he said. "It is imperative that all of us continue to make our voices heard. Closing the Heart Center will result in increased preventable deaths...and we simply will not allow that to happen to our community." 

**BELOW:** Waterbury Hospital employees, from left, Joanne Borduas, Michele Christiano and Beth Grant show that their *Hearts are in the right Place.*



# HUMANITARIAN AWARD



**VICKIE LUDDY**  
**NAMED 2008**  
**HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR**

## Former Farm Girl Grew Up to Dedicate Her Time to Hospital



**ABOVE: Vickie and her husband, Waterbury Police Officer Christopher Luddy, who passed away in 1974.**

**BELOW: Vickie was an assistant bank treasurer in 1966 when she helped these children learn to save their pennies.**



In her 22 years as a volunteer at Waterbury Hospital, **Vickie Luddy** has been a dietary aide, a cashier at the gift shop, a president of the Hospital Auxiliary, a fundraiser organizer and a saint to hundreds of children whose visits to the hospital were made a little less scary with the help of a donated teddy bear.

For all that and more, Vickie was recently named as Waterbury Hospital's 2008 Humanitarian of the Year.

"Vickie Luddy's selfless dedication to our hospital is truly remarkable," said John Tobin, president and CEO of Waterbury Hospital. "She has served us all in so many ways and in so many capacities, that I'm not at all surprised to learn she is our Humanitarian of the Year. It is very fitting that she will receive this award. She is a very deserving individual."

Vickie first learned the value of volunteer work as a young girl growing up on her family's farm in Waterbury. The oldest of six children, she took great joy in doing any job that would help the family, and the farm, run smoothly.

"If one of us got sick, we would all step up to make sure everything got done the way it should," Vickie said. "It just became ingrained in us to help out whenever we could, and it carried with me throughout my life."

**Katy Hanlon**, the hospital's chief dietician who worked alongside Vickie for many years, said Vickie's low-key style is typical for people from her generation.

"She's a calm, steady, classy, behind-the-scenes type of person who doesn't always get the recognition she deserves, so I'm thrilled she is getting this award," Hanlon said. "For Vickie, it was always about the patients and making sure Waterbury Hospital was being the best it could be."

Vickie's devotion to the hospital began in the mid-1970s, when her husband of 16 years, Christopher Luddy, a local police officer, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Vickie says she remembers well being impressed with the compassionate care her husband received at the hands of hospital staff.

Then, a few years later, her elderly father slipped and fell on the front porch of his home. Rocco Gagliardi was rushed to Waterbury Hospital, where doctors performed surgery on his fractured hip. Vickie again was struck by the way the hospital staff took care of her father.

"I resolved right then and there that when I retired from my job, I would volunteer at Waterbury Hospital," she said.

In 1986, when Vickie retired from her longtime job as an assistant bank treasurer, she made good on that promise when she began a routine that would be part of



**LEFT: As president of the Hospital Auxiliary from 1991 to 1994, Vickie presents President and CEO John Tobin with a fetal heart monitor donated by the Auxiliary.**

her life for more than two decades. From her home on Over Street about a mile from the hospital, she walked every day to the hospital, first to work as a dietary aid for patients and then as a cashier at the gift shop. Usually, she worked eight or more hours a day -- all of it free of charge.

"It's not true to say I didn't get anything for it, because helping people is very rewarding," she said. "And I've also made many, many friends over the years who I've kept up with. I'm a people person. I like to get out and do things to help people."

Besides her work helping patients and customers at the gift shop, Vickie also served as president of the Hospital Auxiliary from 1991 to 1994. It was then that she launched a program to donate teddy bears to children coming to the hospital to undergo procedures such as CAT scans. Hoping to help ease their fears, she mobilized the Auxiliary to purchase hundreds of stuffed teddy bears to hand out to little patients.

**Kevin Freeman**, a Senior CT Technologist, who operates the CT Scan machinery, said the teddy bears have been a great success.

"You'd be surprised how quickly the sight of a teddy bear will calm the kids down," he said. "They really work."

**Linda Osterman Hamid**, the current president of the Auxiliary, said Vickie's legacy has served as an example for all who came after her. She pointed to Vickie's many accomplishments as an Auxiliary member, including numerous successful fundraisers. During her tenure, Vickie helped raise funds for the hospital by helping to organize fashion shows, polo charity matches and other popular events. She continues to be an influential and respected voice within the Auxiliary, Osterman Hamid said.

"Vickie Luddy embodies the virtues that we all admire but few attain: strength, generosity of spirit, humility, compassion, deep faith and an indomitable will to make an important contribution to others," Osterman Hamid said. "Her contributions have touched the lives of people of all ages and diverse backgrounds."

Besides her work at Waterbury Hospital, Vickie has also been a volunteer for more than 20 years at the local Easter Seals chapter, as well as a volunteer treasurer for her church, Our Lady of Loreto. Two years ago, she received the Archdiocese's Medal of Appreciation for her years of contributions to her parish.

Vickie's routine has changed slightly in recent years after undergoing numerous back surgeries. Relying on a cane to help her stand up, she no longer walks to the hospital, and the eight hour days of volunteering now take place once or twice a week instead of every day.

But Vickie is still a familiar face around the hospital, and she intends to keep it that way. She recalls the days after one of her surgeries when she was confined to her bed for several days in a row.

"I hated it, I just wanted to get up and get going," she said with a laugh. "That's the way I've always been. I guess it comes from growing up on a farm, you just never want to run out of things to do." 🐾

**BELOW: Vickie poses with Kevin Freeman, CT Scan Technician, who holds one of the teddy bears donated under Vickie's leadership.**



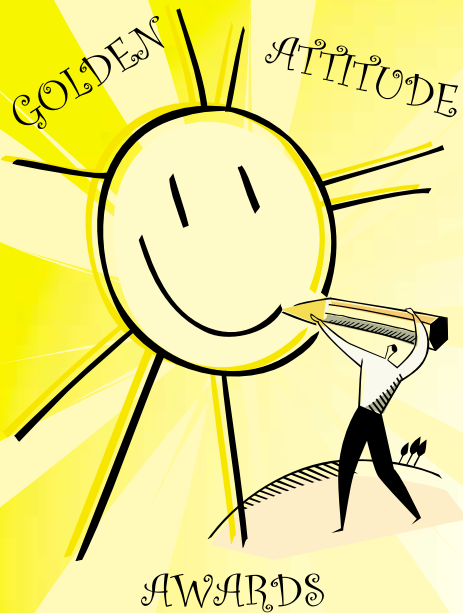
Please come celebrate Vickie Luddy's many contributions to Waterbury Hospital at the Ninth Annual Charity Gala on Saturday, Nov. 15 at the Holiday Inn Grand. The gala to benefit Waterbury Hospital's Surgical Services Department will take place from 5:30 p.m. to midnight, and will feature a ceremony in which Vickie will be given the 2008 Humanitarian of the Year Award. For more information, call Gege Pelletier in the Fund Development Office at (203) 573-7691.

# What Do You Think About Safety?

**Be on the lookout for a survey.**  
Waterbury Hospital needs your feedback!

**Become a Partner in Safety by completing and submitting the Patient Safety Culture Survey that will be made available in September and October.**

Share your opinions about quality and safety in the hospital, and help Waterbury Hospital to measure the organization's culture. Waterbury Hospital strives to improve safety, enhance clinical outcomes and decrease preventable errors. Submission of a completed survey entitles employees to enter a drawing for fantastic prizes!



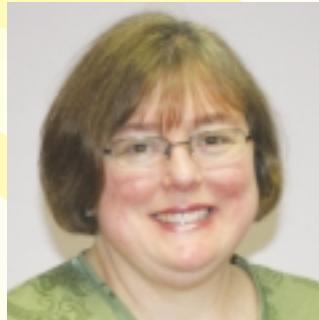
Beverly Naugle, RN



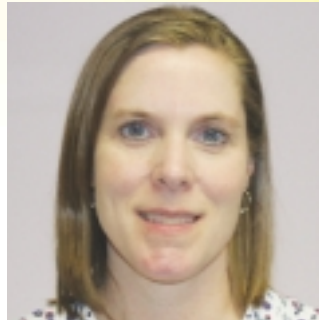
Carol White



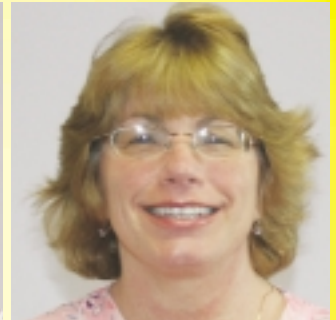
Carmela Calabrese



Joanne Liljedahl



Lynn Bavone



Patricia Houle


## Award Winners Set The

# Gold Standard

Waterbury Hospital is fortunate to have employees who regularly go the extra mile to contribute to a pleasant and efficient work environment, but this year's recipients of the annual Golden Attitude Awards were recognized for going the extra mile and beyond.

At a ceremony earlier this year, a crowd of co-workers, supervisors, family and friends cheered the six people selected to win the award, which is given to those who show exemplary professionalism, attitude and service excellence throughout the year.

This year's award recipients are: **Lynn Bavone**, Dietary Aide; **Carmela Calabrese**, Building Services Porter; **Patricia Houle**, Medical Lab Technician; **Joanne Liljedahl**, Technical Support Trainer; **Beverly Naugle, RN**, Family Birthing Center; and **Carol White**, Access Coordinator. Each nominee was nominated by a peer, co-worker or other person with whom they came in contact during a business day at the hospital. Each of the recipients received high praise from those who nominated them.

"These employees exemplify the qualities that make Waterbury Hospital such a special place," said **Kathy Mulston**, VP of Human Resources. "We are very fortunate and very proud to honor the contributions they regularly make to our hospital community." 




## New Location for Hospital's EEG Lab Move to Second Floor Provides More Access for Patients

The Electroencephalography (EEG) lab has moved to a new location on the second floor of the main building at Waterbury Hospital. The move was part of the hospital's initiative to free up space on the sixth floor in the Pomeroy Building where it plans to incorporate additional patient rooms. The location is also more accessible to patients, according to Director **Steven L. Eisen, MD** (shown at left with EEG technician **Maggie Root**).

An EEG is a test that detects problems in the electrical activity of the brain. Electrodes are placed on the scalp over multiple areas of the brain to detect and record patterns of electrical activity and check for abnormalities. The test lasts between 20 and 30 minutes, though the lab has the capability to track the brain's electrical activity for 24 hours.

The lab also has state-of-the-art technology that enables physicians to instantly view test results while allowing them to send the results electronically to other physicians' offices.

Dr. Eisen, who has been with Waterbury Hospital for 37 years, works alongside **Alok Bhargava, MD**, **Kenneth Kaplove, MD**, **David Tkeshelashvili, MD**, and **Peter Greco, MD**. **Alphonse R. Bobowick, MD** recently retired after 36 years with Waterbury Hospital. Along with Root, a former Golden Attitude Award winner whom Eisen described as one of the most experienced EEG lab technicians in the state, other lab techs include **Maitri Desai**, **Allie Loga** and **Pat Santoro**. 

# 50 STATES in 50 YEARS



When **Susan O'Brien, MS, MT**, stepped off the plane on a trip to Hawaii this summer, she wasn't just elated to be there because of the glorious tropical weather and stunning scenery.

The vacation with her 17-year-old son, Chris, also marked the realization of a lifelong goal to visit all 50 states in the United States by the time she turned 50 years old.

O'Brien, an Education Consultant for Waterbury Hospital, first conceived her goal as a teenage girl riding with her parents and her two siblings on a cross-country camping trip. The journey took the family from their Connecticut home to points south, west and north, and it was then that O'Brien said she learned the many virtues of travel.

"Seeing things you used to read about, the mountains and the cornfields, makes a big impact on you," she said. "It broadens your understanding of the world around you, and it brings you closer to the people who are traveling with you."

O'Brien's family crossed through 20 states during that trip, and she made an effort to visit the remaining 30 in the years since. A few years ago, she realized she was in danger of falling short of her goal, so she and her son stepped up their efforts to visit the states she had not yet seen, which included Tennessee, Ohio and Alabama.

Last year, when she turned 49, O'Brien realized that the only states she still had yet to see were Alabama and Hawaii. So she and her son spent a week in Birmingham, Alabama.

"It was an interesting trip, not one I would have taken otherwise," she said with a laugh. "But that was part of the goal and that meant that this year, when I turned 50, we could go to Hawaii."

The best part the trip, she said, was getting to spend one-on-one time with her son.

"Fourteen hours sitting together on the plane, we really had a chance to talk and grow closer," she said.

She said she is grateful to her father for instilling a love of travel in her.

"He told us kids that when he died, he would be leaving us no money, only memories," she said. "That's a wonderful gift."

Now O'Brien intends to set out a new goal for herself and her son. One possibility: visiting all seven continents by the time she turns 70.

"I gotta keep moving," she said. 

## Training the NEXT GENERATION of EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDERS

Hospital collaborates with local high school and ambulance service



A creative collaboration between Waterbury Hospital, the National College of Technical Instruction (NCTI) and Wilby High School in Waterbury is producing the region's newest crop of emergency medical responders – and possibly tomorrow's physicians, nurses and medical technologists.

That's especially important with today's shortage of nurses and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), explains **Ralph Miro**, Trauma/EMS Coordinator for Waterbury Hospital. "It's critical to expose students to careers that benefit their communities, especially because there's a profound need for experienced, well-trained medical responders," Miro said.

The program, offered free of charge, came together thanks to leadership from several people, including **Jeffrey Sedlack, MD, FACS**, associate director of surgery at Waterbury Hospital; **Trish Spofford**, grant coordinator at Waterbury Hospital; and **Juana Clarke**, Director of Grants and Operations Audit at Waterbury Hospital. They recognized an opportunity to further support the community by training high school students.

American Medical Response staff **Judith Lynch** and **Andrew Palmeri** led the training, working with a curriculum developed by the National College of Technical Instruction (NCTI).

"The first step is to complete a NCTI 50-hour training program that results in Medical Response Technician (MRT) certification," Lynch said. "That's the precursor for becoming an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). The classes are long and challenging, but the kids really love the hands-on parts – doing CPR and airway management, splinting, learning how to stem bleeding, taking pulses and blood pressure and gaining a working knowledge of basic emergency medicine."

"This is a great group of kids – they were polite, interested in the program, and enthusiastic about learning skills they could apply in 'real life,'" Palmeri said.

The MRT training was condensed from a 16-week program into eight weeks, meeting three times a week from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. during the summer.

"These students gave up most of their summer because they wanted the personal challenge and were interested in work that would benefit others," Sedlack said. "We hope to see them working at Waterbury Hospital sometime in the future."

Wilby student Eric Arroyo completed the MRT portion of the training, and plans to continue through the EMT training when he turns 16.

"I took this class because I wanted more opportunities for myself," said Arroyo. "I thought it was fun and a great experience."

Waterbury Hospital, Clarke said, is now exploring funding to take this successful summer program and turn it into a regular, 16-week after-school program at Wilby High School. 





# PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT RECEIVES NATIONAL NOTICE

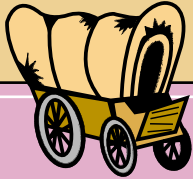
An innovative program designed to help boost the morale and self-esteem of HIV/AIDS patients through photography was recognized last month at a national conference in Washington DC. The photography program, which was implemented last year by the Waterbury Hospital Infectious Disease Clinic, has helped more than a dozen HIV/AIDS patients discover confidence and purpose by encouraging them to take photographs.

At the annual Ryan White All Titles Meeting in Washington, DC in late August, one of the patients told a crowd about how her life has changed since she began exploring the world of photography.

"I feel like a new person being in this group," the woman told the gathering. "I picked myself off the ground and I made a promise to myself to never look back." **Richard Smith**, a social worker at Waterbury Hospital who oversees the photography program, said the patient who spoke at the conference is now taking photography classes at Naugatuck Valley Community College.

"It's just a matter of giving them something they can be proud of," he said. "A little thing like that can make a big difference."

Smith said the photographs taken by the patients in the program will continue to be on display in the hospital and in other forums in the months ahead. 📷

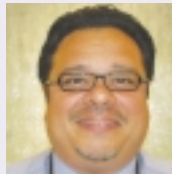


## WELCOME WAGON

**Waterbury Hospital congratulates and welcomes the following new employees who joined the hospital in September:**

- Paul L. Anthony
- Shawna L. Badgley
- Christine Bracken
- Dawn M. Butterly
- Yhavonna Easton
- Katharine Falotico
- Laurie Giroux
- Jessica Gordon
- Andrew Gruner
- Joyce B. Mackey
- Ieasha McDonald
- Anthony Patton
- Sabra R. Rabinko
- Lucille A. Spinelli
- Vicki Valente
- Julie Weber

## ON THE MOVE



Oscar Herrera

**Oscar Herrera**, the Director of Security and Safety for Waterbury Hospital, has been named the co-chairman of the hospital's Disaster Preparedness Program. Herrera, who has worked for the hospital for 11 years, was selected to be co-chairman of the program with Ralph Miro, the director of Trauma/EMS services at Waterbury Hospital.

Herrera said the program is focusing on the hospital's readiness for a wide range of possible disasters, including a terrorist attack, a flood or an extended loss of electrical power.



Kelly Poskus,  
MS, RN, CNRN

**Kelly Poskus, MS, RN, CNRN**, has recently been named the hospital's new Stroke Coordinator. A former staff nurse on the Yale-New Haven Hospital neuroscience floor, Poskus aims to maintain high standards for stroke prevention and quality of care as well as improve health outcomes of patients experiencing a stroke.



Donita Semple,  
RN, CPHQ

**Donita Semple, RN, CPHQ**, Waterbury Hospital's Quality Management Coordinator, has been named as this year's recipient of the Gail Greene Award by the Connecticut Association of Health Care Quality. Semple has worked for the hospital for 38 years, 15 as Quality Management Coordinator. The Gail Greene Award, which was bestowed on Semple in June, honors those in Connecticut who have contributed to outstanding health care quality.

## UPDATE

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**MANAGING EDITOR: HEATHER TINDALL**  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR: MATT BURGARD**  
SUBMIT ITEMS FOR UPDATE TO:  
[mburgard@wtbyhosp.org](mailto:mburgard@wtbyhosp.org)