



# 2008 Middlesex Health System Community Health Assessment

Middlesex Hospital is committed to providing the best health care possible to the people we serve. In order to do this, the health needs of the community need to be clearly assessed. As part of this process, an institution learns what specific areas require the most urgent attention. From there, work can begin on improving the ways in which priority health care needs are met.

**> It is necessary to “take the pulse” of the community in order to improve health care and identify which major health issues need to be addressed.**

In 2007, Middlesex Hospital initiated this process when it decided to commission a county-wide health assessment, the results of which were completed in 2008 and are outlined in the following pages. This health assessment provides a road map for the future of Community Benefit – a road which the Hospital hopes to have many community partners join – in order to meet the most pressing health care needs of the people we serve.

Working together, with targeted programs and services, we can better serve our community and improve the lives of many for years to come.





The Center for Health Policy, Planning and Research (CHPPR) at the University of New England (716 Stevens Avenue, Portland, ME 04103; [ 207 ] 221-4560; [www.chppr.org](http://www.chppr.org)) designed and conducted the study on behalf of the Middlesex Health System. The survey used data from a number of sources ranging from 2000–2006, including the Connecticut Department of Public Health, hospital-specific data, state birth and mortality records, the Connecticut Department of Healthcare Access, census data, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), and qualitative interviews with representatives throughout the Hospital and the community at large. • Health data was developed for both the city of Middletown and for Middlesex County. Three “peer” counties were identified (Litchfield, New London, and Tolland) based on similar population, socioeconomic, and delivery system characteristics. Results were benchmarked against these peer counties as well as state and national data. • The objectives of the study were to describe the health status of those residing in the city of Middletown and Middlesex County, identify priority health service issues, discover opportunities to improve health, and provide the Hospital with planning information for serving identified community needs in collaboration with community partners when possible.



## Middlesex County Health Statistics

Some key findings from the study  
*A Community Health Assessment  
For Middlesex County, Connecticut,*  
completed in October of 2008.

### Demographic Profile

- The population estimate is 163,774
- The population is “aging in place”, with a 20% increase in the 85+ age group since 2000
- Race and ethnicity have remained relatively constant with 89% White, 4.6% Black, 2.2% Asian and 3.7% Hispanic

### Social and Economic Determinants of Health

- More adults are below the poverty level than in peer counties
- 34% of the uninsured population cannot identify a usual source of care (versus 7% for the insured population)
- Higher levels of uninsured adults under age 65 (11.5%) compared to peer counties (9.5%), but consistent with the State average

### Ambulatory Care Sensitive (ACS) Conditions

- ACS related Emergency Department (ED) visits and hospital admissions are below peer counties and State, except in pediatric admissions
- Geriatric patients are high consumers of ACS-related ED services
- High ED usage in Middletown

### Cardiovascular Health

- Risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease are comparable to peer counties and State
- Rates for hypertension and hypercholesterol are slightly higher than the other study areas
- Hospitalization and mortality rates are lower than the comparison groups
- Middletown has a higher hospitalization rate for cardiovascular disease

### Cancer

- The incidence of cancer and mortality rates from most cancers is similar to benchmarks, except for cervical cancer, which is lower by over 50%
- More adults are screened for cancer

### Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)


- ED visit rates for COPD are lower than peer counties, but higher than State rates
- Half of the adult population is at risk for COPD with 18% as current smokers and 33% as former smokers

### Infectious Disease

- The Hepatitis C infection rate is lowest in Middletown
- Rates of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) are highest in Middletown

S U R V E Y





### Reproductive Health

- Indicators for maternal/child health are generally good
- Teen birth rates are highest in Middletown compared to Middlesex County and peer counties, but, were below State rates; teen birth outcomes in Middletown are better than comparison groups
- There are significantly lower rates of low birth weight and prematurity in Middletown and Middlesex County compared to benchmark areas

### Access to Care

- More adults have a personal doctor (89%) than peer counties and State (87%), and nationwide (80%)
- Of adults who reported no physical exam within the past two years, 56% were uninsured; 47% of uninsured did not seek medical care due to cost

### Mental Health and Substance Abuse

- Emergency Department rates for alcohol dependence in Middletown are more than double State rates
- ED visits and Hospitalization rates for serious mental illness and depression in Middletown are significantly greater than all comparison groups
- ED visits in Middletown for mental health/substance abuse show that 20% of visits were by 25 repeat patients

### Respiratory Health

- Current smoking rates are comparable among all study regions; but more former smokers compared to peer counties and State
- Similar prevalence of asthma among all groups, but significantly lower ED usage and hospitalization for asthma

### Functional Health Status

- Lowest rates of poor physical and mental health and functional impairment compared to all benchmarks
- 7% of adults reported losing 11+ days per month to poor physical health and 7.7% to mental health (2% below benchmarks)

### Chronic Disease

- 25% of adults have hypertension, high cholesterol, or diabetes; 10% have two of these conditions; and, 2% have all three
- Rates of chronic disease are similar to peer counties
- The prevalence and mortality rate of diabetes is comparable across all study regions
- 47% of adults are rated as “well”
- 18% are obese; 34% are overweight
- 18% are current smokers

## R E S U L T S



## Priority Health Issues

Information obtained from CHPPR has helped identify the following three areas that require the most attention by Middlesex Hospital and its community.



### Geriatric Care

The population of Middlesex County is “aging in place.” In Middlesex County between 2000–2006, the age 65+ population increased 7.4%, compared to a less than 1% increase Statewide, and, the age 85+ population increased 19.6%, compared to 15.9% Statewide. In addition, the study’s data indicate that Middlesex County’s geriatric patients are relying heavily on Emergency Department (ED) services for routine care. As the continuing growth of these age groups is likely to increase demand for complex and consistent health care services, these findings have significant implications for the future of Middlesex County’s health delivery system. New and/or additional ways to provide primary care services to our community’s elderly will therefore need to be identified and established.

Providing health care to older adults depends on the patient’s abilities and limitations, access to health care (e.g., primary care access and transportation), financial resources, and a personal support network. As a result, effective health care services must be able to respond to these potential barriers and include delivery of services within community-based settings as well as traditional medical facilities.

The distinct health and social needs of older adults requires new and innovative ways of thinking among all health care and community providers as to how to best address the growing needs of this specific population. Qualitative interviewing during the data collection phase of the project gave insight to possible drivers for the high geriatric ED utilization for non-emergent services, but closer examination will be necessary. In response, Middlesex Hospital has created a sub-committee tasked with reviewing geriatric services and linkages in our service area, and looks forward to working with community partners to ensure the proper infrastructure is in place to serve our community’s elderly.

Based on the results of the Middlesex Hospital Community Health Assessment, subcommittees have been formed to address the three major priority areas, with oversight from the Hospital’s Board of Directors. Pictured from left to right are: Naseema Merchant, M.D., chair, COPD Subcommittee; Barbara Weiss, Middlesex Health System Board of Directors; Otto Weis, M.D., chair, Geriatric Subcommittee; and John Santopietro, M.D., chair, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Subcommittee.





## Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

The increase in chronic disease in the United States has resulted in increased use of health care services and increased costs. COPD is a condition that includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema. According to the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, 10 million Americans have been diagnosed with COPD since 2000, with approximately 24 million affected by the disease. COPD is currently one of the top five leading causes of death in the U.S., with increasing mortality. Studies indicate high hospital re-admittance rates for COPD patients after discharge. In Middlesex County, as 18% of adults are current smokers and 33% are former smokers, half of the adult population is at risk for COPD.

Proper COPD management may effectively lower health care utilization rates and increase quality of life. Part of COPD management is the understanding that it is a chronic condition. The Middlesex Hospital Center for Chronic Care Management (CCCM) provides evidence-based treatment and preventive services for many chronic diseases. As COPD treatment was an identified health assessment priority area, a workgroup including Hospital physicians, pulmonary function, and CCCM staff has been established to develop and execute an action plan including inpatient and outpatient components and collaboration with community partners.



## Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

The city of Middletown's markedly higher ED and hospitalization rates for mental illness coupled with the significantly higher rates of ED visits due to alcohol dependence among adults of all ages, in relation to comparison groups, indicate a need for an in-depth examination of the current treatment options available prior to requiring acute care for patients in these sub-groups.

The study proposed that high ED utilization rates in Middletown for mental illness and substance abuse may be attributed to one of several conditions, which include a large population with mental health and substance abuse problems residing in the service area; a lack of access to primary care for this patient group; and/or potential access issues for mental health and substance abuse treatment programs.

A data review of Middlesex Hospital ED utilization found that in a specific 21 month time-frame, 42% of Emergency Department patients treated for mental health/substance abuse issues were repeat ED patients, with 25 of those patients accounting for 430 visits (20% of visits), and three utilizing the ED a minimum of 28 times each. The frequency of these visits, along with the aforementioned high ED utilization rates, points to the need for a systematic review of current available resources for mental health and substance abuse problems.

In response to this identified priority area, Middlesex Hospital has formed a sub-committee that is eager to delve into the study's findings and build on the strengths of existing relationships by collaborating with community partners regarding potential solutions.

**Moving Ahead.** Middlesex Hospital hopes that the health assessment findings are valuable and meaningful to everyone in the community. The information has clearly pointed to several areas of concern that require attention, not only from the Hospital, but from organizations and individuals throughout Middlesex County. With your cooperation and assistance, we are confident that the primary health needs of the community can be addressed in the most appropriate and effective ways possible. • The full report, *A Community Health Assessment For Middlesex County, Connecticut*, is available for download at [www.middlesexhospital.org](http://www.middlesexhospital.org).

The involvement and support of many local organizations and agencies play a pivotal role in making sure Middlesex Hospital can continue to improve its Community Benefit programs. Working together, we can make a real difference in your life and the lives of your family, friends, and neighbors. >



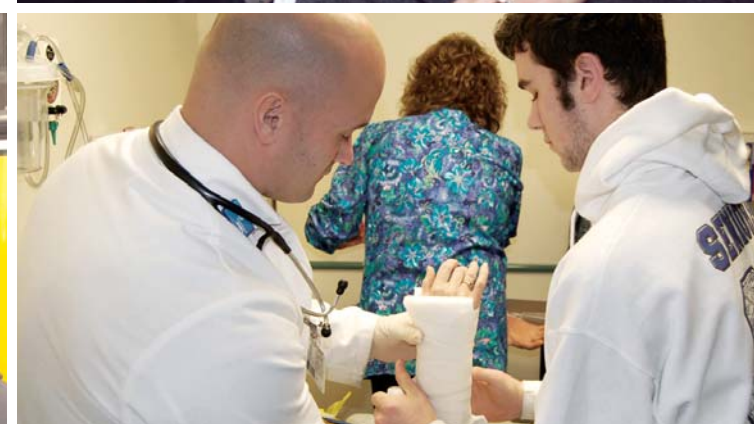


## Middlesex Hospital is fortunate to receive ongoing cooperation and involvement from the many businesses, organizations, and other health agencies throughout Middlesex County.

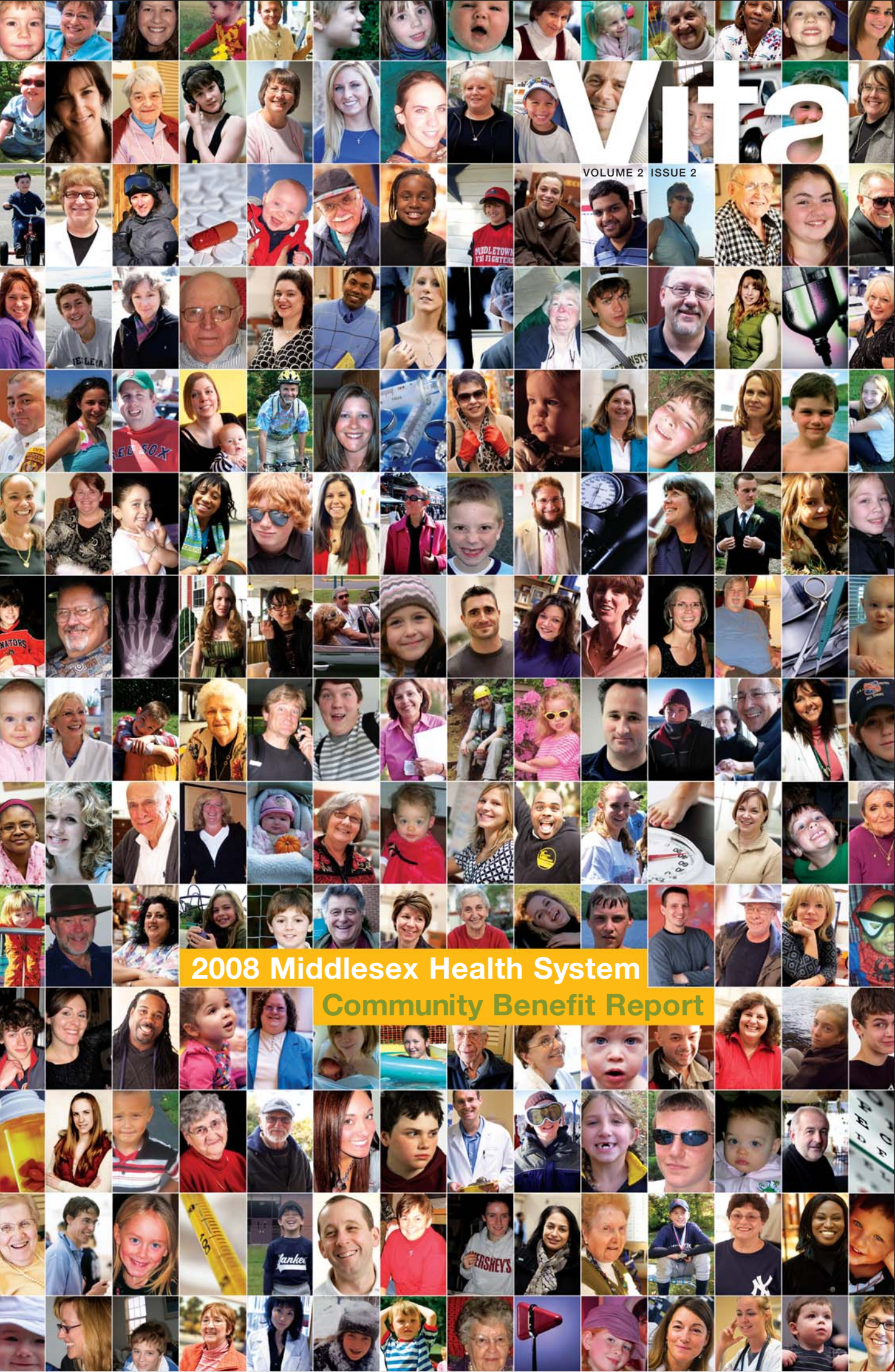
These agencies are too numerous to mention, but a sampling includes the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce and the entire business community, countywide municipal and government services, emergency responders, agencies for the aging, mental health providers and substance abuse prevention agencies, the educational sector, and the many, many other agencies and organizations that serve our communities' needs.

These community agencies and organizations help ensure our safety, improve the lives of its citizens, and provide help in time of need.

As we move forward in addressing the primary areas of concern that arose from the health assessment, Middlesex Hospital will need to enlist the assistance and support of many of these same agencies. Together, with a clear understanding of the important issues, we can begin to make a significant impact on creating and sustaining a healthier future for us all.







Vita

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 2

2008 Middlesex Health System  
Community Benefit Report





Robert G. Kiely  
President/CEO  
Middlesex Health System, Inc.

> **Keeping the heartbeat of the community strong.** Middlesex Hospital focuses on keeping the community healthy and strong. Whether this is done through treatment in the hospital or preventive care and education outside its walls, our mission for more than 100 years has been, and continues to be, to improve the health of the communities we serve.

Through its Community Benefit programs, Middlesex Hospital has created ties that will never be broken. The Hospital is here to care for the patients and families who enter its doors. It also reaches out to the entire community with the numerous programs it has developed to educate and prevent illness – in people’s own homes and in the communities in which they live, work, and enjoy their lives.

Middlesex Hospital is proud to share this important information with the community. Our Community Benefit Program is an extremely important initiative,

as it is so closely related to the health system’s primary mission: to improve the health and well being of people throughout the community.

Inside this report, you will read about all of the Community Benefit programs Middlesex Hospital offers. You will also get a more in-depth look at a few outstanding services that address issues faced by families, children, seniors, and those in financial need. This report contains the results of a recent assessment of the health status of Middlesex County residents and will hopefully provide the Hospital and its community partners with a road map for future community oriented programs.

Middlesex Hospital has been connecting our services with the needs of area residents for many years and for one reason – to keep you, your family, and your neighbors healthy. It is our singular mission, and by working together, we can continue to make our community a healthier place to live, now and into the future.

*Robert G. Kiely*

# Our Community Programs & Services

Middlesex Hospital offers a wide variety of clinical, educational, support, screening, and self-help programs and services in response to the increasing health care needs of our community.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT SERVICES

In order to respond to the health care needs of the community, Middlesex Hospital offers many low-cost or free-of-charge clinical and educational programs, screenings, and self-help support.

## HEALTH PROFESSIONS EDUCATION

Educational programs that help prepare students for clinical and administrative futures in health care.

## SUBSIDIZED HEALTH SERVICES

Several services provided by the Hospital routinely operate at a loss but continue to be offered in order to serve the community.

## RESEARCH

Clinical studies are conducted to determine new or more effective methods of treatment.

## FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Financial and in-kind contributions are made to community organizations by the Hospital and staff members while on work time.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

These activities support community assets by offering the expertise and resources of the health care organization.

## COMMUNITY BENEFIT OPERATIONS

Community Benefit operations include costs associated with staff, strategy, operations, planning and community health needs assessments.





### General Support Groups

**[860] 358-6387** Ongoing support is offered for diabetes patients, caregivers, meditation, bereavement, weight management for women, cancer survivors, breast feeding, and people with breast cancer, prostate cancer, leukemia, lymphoma, and multiple myeloma.

### Breast Cancer Awareness Event

**[860] 358-2050** This free, annual event focuses on the latest developments in the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer and on breast cancer issues important to women.

### The Lebed Method, Focus On Healing

**[203] 457-1656** This gentle, therapeutic exercise program set to music helps cancer survivors and those with chronic illnesses regain mobility and range of motion.

### Look Good ... Feel Better Program

**[860] 358-2061** This program, co-sponsored with the American Cancer Society, was designed for women who are experiencing the cosmetic side effects of cancer treatment.

### Fight Breast Cancer With Your Fork And Sneakers

**[860] 358-2052** This is a special nutrition and exercise class for breast cancer patients.

### Wig Room

**[860] 358-2050** Cancer patients can obtain free consultations and choose from a variety of wigs.

### Arts In The Atrium

**[860] 358-2061** This is a free weekly art program for cancer patients.

### I Can Cope

**[860] 358-2053** This multi-part series, co-sponsored with the American Cancer Society, addresses a variety of issues related to cancer diagnosis and treatment.

### Cancer Survivors Day

**[860] 358-2050** This annual event is a day for cancer survivors and their loved ones to celebrate life in a fun and relaxing atmosphere with music, entertainment, and inspirational presentations from other survivors and caregivers.

### Cancer Care Program

**[860] 358-2030** This free service assists patients in navigating their treatment regimens and therapies and provides referrals to support groups and other appropriate services.

### Cancer Care Transportation Assistance

**[860] 358-2050** No-cost van service is available to transport shoreline patients to radiation therapy appointments at the Cancer Center.

### Cancer Center Patient Resource Library

**[860] 358-2020** The cancer information resources at the Cancer Center Library are available to the public and cancer patients and their families.

### Pregnancy & Birth Center Classes

**[860] 358-6320** Family Advocacy participants receive tuition waivers for Newborn Care, Prepared Childbirth, and Breastfeeding classes through the Pregnancy & Birth Center. A new Transition to Feeding group was recently created due to community request and is offered to everyone free of charge.

### Memorial Service

**[860] 358-6725** The Pregnancy & Birth Center hosts an annual memorial service for families whose babies have passed away. Hospice and Pastoral Care sponsor an annual Service of Remembrance for families who have lost loved ones in the Hospice program.

### Public Health And Wellness Information

**[860] 358-6387** The Hospital produces and distributes educational materials to the public on a variety of health and wellness topics, including an annual quality and clinical performance report, a community benefit report, and a quarterly Cancer Center newsletter. Health care content is also available on the Hospital's Web site.

### Tremaine Library

**[860] 358-6286** The Tremaine Medical Library offers its comprehensive health information resources to the public.

### Safe Sitter Course

**[860] 358-3000** This program teaches new babysitters ages 11 to 13 how to safely and responsibly care for children.

### Financial Counseling

**[860] 358-2402** Middlesex Hospital provides information about financial assistance to all patients and makes this assistance available to individuals who meet established guidelines.

### Stroke Education

**[860] 358-6440** Free informational presentations about the signs and symptoms of stroke are offered to local organizations and the public.

Throughout the year, Middlesex Hospital offers a wide variety of special events, informational presentations, health screenings and clinics, and support groups to address the various health needs of our community members.



### Center For Chronic Care Management

**[860] 358-3000** The Center for Chronic Care Management offers disease management programs focusing on adult and pediatric asthma, chronic heart failure, smoking cessation, diabetes, and childhood obesity.

### Partnership With Community Health Center For Prenatal Care

**[860] 358-6300** The Hospital's Family Medicine Residency Program provides prenatal physician services to low-income and uninsured mothers at the Community Health Center.

### Women, Infants, And Children (WIC) Screenings

**[860] 358-4070** Homecare coordinates WIC services and screenings for babies and children of low-income mothers.

### Health Fairs/Screenings/ Clinics/Career Fairs

**[860] 358-6387** Hospital staff members routinely conduct health screenings, including those for high cholesterol, blood pressure, and skin cancer. In addition, the Hospital staff participates in health and career fairs throughout the year in many local towns and for many local businesses.

### Educational Presentations

**[860] 358-6980** Hospital employees regularly give presentations on health care topics to community members, local organizations and businesses, local schools and colleges, and non-Hospital affiliated health care professionals.

### Annual Health Examinations For The Haddam Fire Company

Free annual physical examinations are performed by a family medicine physician for the members of the fire company.

### Red Cross Blood Drives

**[860] 358-6735** Quarterly volunteer blood drives are conducted at the Hospital.

### Transportation And Prescription Vouchers

Transportation vouchers are provided to patients when necessary in urgent situations. When deemed appropriate, patients who are unable to pay for medication receive prescription vouchers to help defray costs.

### Family Medicine Residency Program

**[860] 358-6300** The Family Medicine Residency Program has graduated many family medicine physicians who have established practices in the Middlesex County area. Residents are required to develop and participate in community health projects during their course of study.

### Medical And Nursing Students

**[860] 358-6300 Medical Student Training; [860] 358-6480 Nursing Education** The Hospital welcomes medical and nursing student interns and provides on-site training during clinical rotations. Nursing students receive hands-on mentorship in the majority of clinical service lines year-round.

### Other Student Training

The Hospital provides clinical training in a variety of fields. Non-clinical training includes administrative fellowships and internships in biomedical engineering, public health, and pastoral care.

### Radiologic Technology Program

**[860] 358-6508** Now in its 50<sup>th</sup> year, the Radiologic Technology Program is designed to prepare graduates to pass the national certification test for radiographers, as well as to qualify for state licensure.

### Shoreline Career Day

**[860] 358-3700** During this annual event, local high school students can experience an emergency in real time and learn what being a health care professional is like.

### Hospice

**[860] 358-6100** The Hospice Program serves the needs of patients and their families in the Hospital and at home by offering dignity and compassion to people in the final stages of life.

### Middlesex Hospital Homecare

**[860] 358-5600** Teamed with the extensive resources of Middlesex Hospital, Middlesex Hospital Homecare offers a wide range of professional clinical services in the home, combined with state-of-the-art health care by a dedicated, caring staff.

### Behavioral Health

**[860] 358-6760** Middlesex Hospital offers a large spectrum of behavioral health services, including inpatient and outpatient therapy and support groups for children, adults, and seniors.





### Emergency Department

**[860] 358-6686** The Emergency Department treats every person who comes through the door, regardless of ability to pay. In addition, the Emergency Crisis Service provides assessment of acute psychiatric patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Paramedics

**[860] 358-6687** The Middlesex Hospital Paramedic Service provides skilled emergency care to patients before they arrive at the Hospital. Paramedics also conduct Emergency Medical Services training for volunteer emergency medical service organizations, including local fire departments and ambulance associations.

### Family Advocacy Program

**[860] 358-3401** The Family Advocacy Program offers comprehensive programs for children and adults, including behavioral health outpatient services for children and adolescents, parenting education, and community resource referrals for families.

### Cardiac Rehabilitation

**[860] 358-2450** After a heart attack or heart surgery, a patient often undergoes this program of monitored exercise and education to help in recovery and improve lifestyle.

### Cancer Center Clinical Trials

**[860] 358-2058** The Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center conducts national clinical trials and research on an ongoing basis, including those for breast, colon, lung, esophageal, pancreatic, prostate, rectal, and other cancers.

### Behavioral Health Clinical Trials

**[860] 358-6760** The Behavioral Health Department conducts clinical trials for a variety of behavioral health diagnoses. In 2008, the Family Advocacy Program began participation in a study of adolescent schizophrenia.

### In-Kind Donations

The Hospital regularly contributes in-kind donations, such as equipment, food, medical supplies, linens, to both local and global communities. In addition, the Hospital's main campus, satellite locations and assisted living facility, One MacDonough Place, provide free-of-charge, on-site meeting space for many local groups and organizations throughout the year. Other examples of in-kind donations include absorption of the costs of copies of health information records for patients who cannot afford to pay and staff coordination of community support drives such as the United Way, the Adopt-A-Family holiday gift program, the American Cancer Society Daffodil Days, Families Feeding Families, the Lions' Club eyeglass and hearing aid collection, and Cell Phones for Soldiers.

### Corporate Cash Donations From Middlesex Hospital

In 2008, Middlesex Hospital provided corporate support in the form of sponsorships for a variety of community organizations throughout Middlesex County.

### Childhood Readership

Hospital staffers provide in-kind administrative support for Light One Little Candle, a program through which donated children's books are given to cancer patients to encourage them to spend time reading with the children in their lives, and for Reach Out and Read, through which Family Medicine Residents distribute books and provide guidance to families regarding the benefits of reading.

### Middlesex Hospital Community Council

**[860] 358-6804** The Middlesex Hospital Community Council sponsors such activities as the Hospital's annual holiday tree lighting ceremony and family reading days in both Middletown and Clinton.

### Opportunity Knocks

**[860] 358-4037** This community collaboration is committed to improving the health and well-being of children ages five and younger.

### Community Benefit Staffing

**[860] 358-3034** Middlesex Hospital has a dedicated manager of Community Benefit, along with a Community Benefit steering committee that oversees Community Benefit planning and operations.

### Community Health Assessment

**[860] 358-3034** The comprehensive community health assessment conducted by Middlesex Hospital was finalized in 2008. An overview of the report appears in this issue of VITA.



Childhood obesity has become a serious epidemic in communities throughout the United States. Overweight and obese children face an increased risk of serious health problems as they grow.

## > *Fit for Kids* helps children and families develop lifelong healthy living habits.

Healthy weight management can increase energy and self-confidence in children. It can also reduce their risk of developing diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Children learn their health habits, including eating patterns and activity levels, from their parents.

Because parents and caregivers are the most important role models for teaching their children how to eat well, be physically active, and keep their bodies healthy, through its Center for Chronic Care Management, Middlesex Hospital developed the Fit for Kids Program for families.

Fit for Kids is not a typical weight loss program but instead supports parents and caregivers in adopting a healthier lifestyle for the whole family through eating well and being physically active.

For more information on the Fit for Kids Program at Middlesex Hospital, call [860] 358-3000.





> **“We offer  
clinics in multiple locations**

Registered nurse Joanne Ligas is a woman on the run – running from one community clinic to the next as part of her hectic schedule as a community health nurse in Middlesex Hospital's Homecare Department. Her department offers free, community-based clinics to check blood pressure, sugar and cholesterol levels, and provides flu and pneumonia shots at health fairs, senior centers, private businesses, and many other locations throughout the year.

“My job is to keep the community well,” says Ligas. “Most of the time, I do this by going out and providing clinics at senior centers throughout the area and at the high-rise residential communities here in Middletown itself.

“We provide cholesterol, blood pressure, and blood sugar screenings upon request for any senior or senior center in the area and never turn anybody down. Although our primary focus is on seniors, we also help others, including younger people who may be challenged physically.

“A lot of what I do is teaching,” Ligas adds. “I answer all questions and make time for anyone who wants to talk with me during a screening session. I try to give everybody the time they need and if I can’t talk with them right away, I ask them to sit and wait for me. Because I’m a nurse, people ask me a lot of medical questions or are looking for a second opinion on their health status. As a result, I also often help people make appointments with their doctors.”

Joanne Ligas, R.N., of Middlesex Hospital Homecare, plays a key community benefit role by providing community-based services throughout the year, including flu shot clinics and blood pressure and cholesterol screenings.



This past year alone, Ligas and other Homecare staff provided approximately 3,500 flu vaccinations at the various clinics she conducted throughout Middlesex County.

From time to time, Ligas also provides what she calls “in-services” on a variety of topics, such as how to use salt and sand to prevent winter slips and falls, and has even given a conflict resolution presentation to residents in a local senior housing complex.

## a wide variety of community-based health throughout the year – all for free.”

In addition to her extensive work at senior centers, Ligas also provides screenings at health fairs throughout the community and at local businesses that sponsor health fairs in order to keep their employees educated about various health issues and preventing illness.

Even though she feels she could use a pair of roller skates to get from one screening to another, Ligas doesn’t see what she does as a job. “I wake up every day happy to go to work. Oftentimes, my job leads to an important referral for someone who really needs it, whether it’s for physical or emotional reasons. When I see someone get the help they need, it makes everything I do worthwhile.” For more information, call [860] 358-5600.





> “The dedicated staff of the Family Advocacy in the lives of children and their families through education, support, and community resource





## Program makes a difference throughout Middlesex County networking.”



As its namesake implies, the Family Advocacy Program defines itself by being “on the side” of families and children. Staff members are the voice for many families who have not yet found their own voice, or don’t know how to help themselves become stronger.

The Program is dedicated to improving the lives of children and their families in the following ways:

- Providing services that enhance parents’ ability to provide care for their children;
- Delivering comprehensive behavioral health outpatient services for children and adolescents;
- Improving families’ access to critical resources to enhance their independence;
- Partnering with community agencies to respond to the needs of families.

According to Terri DiPietro, Director of Outpatient Behavioral Health, who oversees the Family Advocacy Program, “We work to empower families to take care of themselves and their children, in a strength-based, culturally competent way that encourages parents to face the challenges of bringing up their children. Whether it’s learning how to discipline a three year old, or dealing with a teenager who has severe psychiatric problems, families can access the services of Family Advocacy to put them on the right road to any type of service that they need. We pride ourselves on being approachable and very well connected with other professionals and other agencies throughout the community and ultimately teach our families how to make and utilize those important connections for themselves.”

What programs does Family Advocacy have to offer to increase the quality of a family’s life?

- Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services
- Enhanced Care Coordination
- Care Coordination
- Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Service
- Nurturing Families Network
- Parent Aide Program
- Opportunity Knocks
- Perinatal Case Management
- Child and Family Services
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program





# There's no place like Home

> Judy LeVasseur lost the love of her life, her husband, Jeff, in May of 2008. She is grateful to Middlesex Hospital and one of its social workers, George Grady, for being able to care for Jeff at home until the day he died and for covering his medical expenses for the past 16 years.



"Jeff had his first stroke in 1992," said Judy. "In all, he had a total of 28 strokes since then. But it was a large brain tumor that caused his death last year."

When Jeff experienced his first stroke in 1992, caused by plaque that loosened up and got caught in his bloodstream during a cardiac procedure at another hospital, both he and Judy were working full-time. But when Jeff came home after a stay at a rehabilitation hospital afterward, Judy realized she would no longer be able to work if she was to care for her husband at home. There was no question in her mind that she had to quit working.

Judy recalled that Jeff had been laid off immediately after his first stroke. It was close to Christmas, and their lights had been turned off because they couldn't pay the electric bill. Without electricity, the LeVasseurs couldn't cook anything for Christmas dinner. It was then that George Grady showed up at their front door with two \$50 Wal-Mart gift certificates so they could

buy prepared food for the holiday. It was the just the first of many ways in which George helped the LeVasseurs in his role as a social worker.

"Every time Jeff had another stroke, he needed some new kind of expensive equipment, which we couldn't afford because I wasn't working," Judy said. "That's when George would request Wal-Mart cards provided by the employee-supported Helping Hands Fund at Middlesex Hospital for us. It allowed us to buy groceries so we could use the money we had to purchase the medical equipment. It made all the difference."

Because of their financial situation, the LeVasseurs were also eligible to apply for financial assistance from the Hospital to cover Jeff's many hospital stays at Middlesex. The couple qualified for assistance, which covered 100% of Jeff's hospitalization costs.



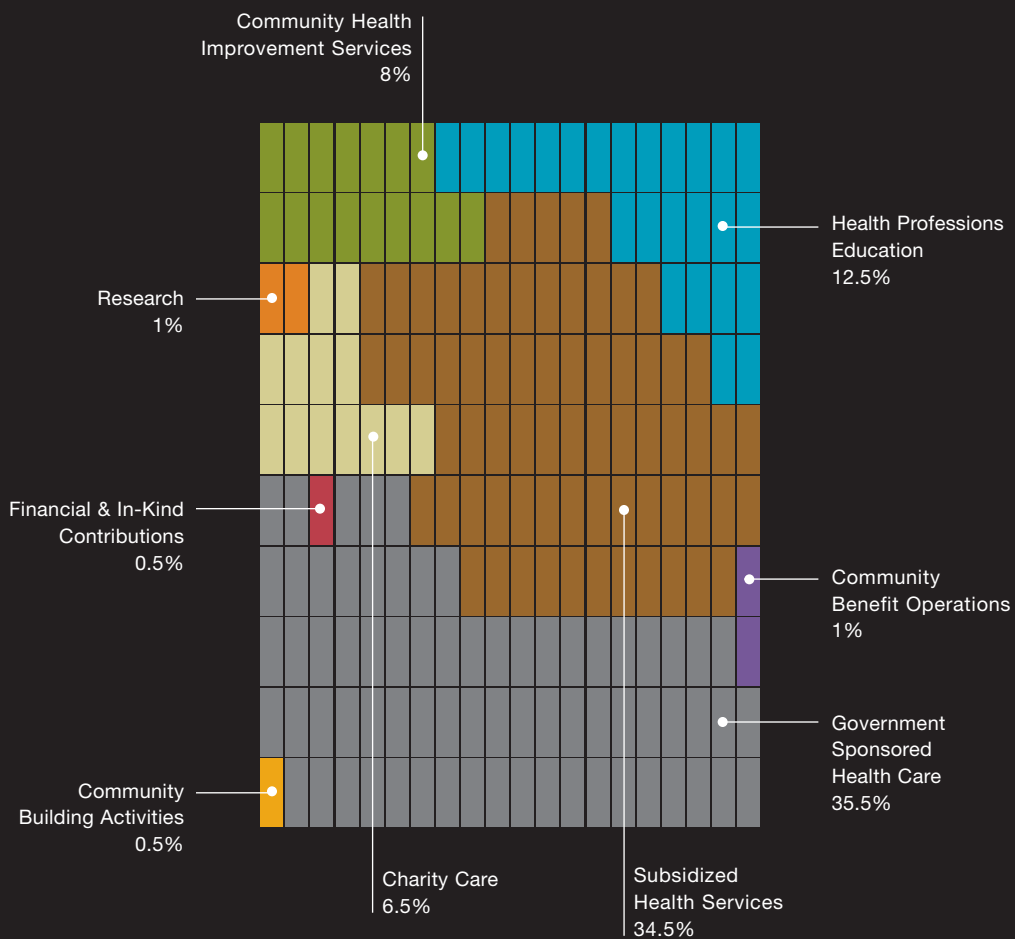
When asked about the paperwork involved in the application process for financial assistance at Middlesex Hospital, Judy responded quickly. "It's really not that bad and it's definitely worth the effort. I don't know how we would have made it through everything without the financial assistance," she stated. "The nicest thing was that Jeff was able to be in a hospital close by where we live. I can't tell you how important that was. And once you've made the initial application, the Hospital just asks you to update the information if you need it again, which is very simple to do. If you really need the help, you don't mind filling out some paperwork," Judy added.

Judy now faces chronic medical problems of her own, including diabetes, heart, and orthopedic issues and she continues to qualify for 100% financial assistance at the Hospital, even after her husband's passing. "The help is there if you need it," Judy said.

Throughout all the hardship, however, Judy has no regrets or "what ifs."

"The life I had with my husband was worth every minute," she quietly asserted. "Middlesex Hospital helped me help my husband." Judy believes that because of people like George, along with their family physician, Dr. Alan Douglass, and the financial support of the Hospital, she was able to get the most out of their precious time together. And when the end drew closer for Jeff and he entered the Hospice homecare program at Middlesex Hospital, she was able to be with him in the place he belonged – at home with the woman he loved.





**Total Community Benefit** In 2008, Middlesex Hospital provided its community benefit programs at a total cost of \$29,254,066. Although the figures shown here were developed according to established reporting guidelines, it is impossible to place a dollar value on the true impact these programs have on the lives of people throughout our community.

# Overview of Expenditures and People Served

		PERSONS	BENEFIT
Community Health Improvement Services	Community Health Education	51,344	485,645
	Community-Based Clinical Services	2,833	1,517
	Health Care Support Services	3,501	1,779,120
	Totals:	57,678	2,266,282
Health Professions Education	Physicians/Medical Students	40	2,229,214
	Nurses/Nursing Students	177	587,790
	Other Health Professional Education	881	855,007
	Totals:	1,098	3,672,011
Subsidized Health Services	Emergency and Trauma Services	53,620	5,935,540
	Hospital Outpatient Services	940	531,442
	Women's and Children's Services	250	0**
	Hospice/Homecare	3,781	2,340,329
	Behavioral Health Services	1,981	1,248,499
	Totals:	60,572	10,055,810
Research	Clinical Research	228	257,672
	Community Health Research	NA*	81,912
	Totals:	228	339,584
Financial and In-Kind Contributions	Cash Donations	NA*	64,471
	In-Kind Donations	1,875	67,461
	Cost of Fundraising for Community Programs	NA*	11,352
	Totals:	1,875	143,284
Community Building Activities	Economic Development	NA*	30,485
	Community Support	10	1,748
	Coalition Building	1,500	24,297
	Community Health Improvement Advocacy	160	378
	Workforce Development	161	31,967
	Totals:	1,831	88,875
Community Benefit Operations	Other Resources	NA*	288,587
	Totals:	NA*	288,587
Charity Care	Free/Discounted Health Services	2,546	1,932,613
	Totals:	2,546	1,932,613
Government Sponsored Health Care	Medicaid Shortfall	11,599	10,467,020
	Totals:	11,599	10,467,020
Grand Totals		137,427	29,254,066
In addition, the Hospital has absorbed \$8,055,322 in bad debt costs. These costs, however, do not qualify as reportable Community Benefit.			
Bad Debt	Totals:	18,800	8,055,322

Notes:

\* Numbers served unable to be quantified as they apply to the community at large

\*\* Financial benefit incorporated within "Health Professions Education" category

The values provided above have been calculated based on available data as of January 2009.



Middlesex Hospital has a long history of providing programs to meet the health care needs of its communities. It is both our mission and our privilege. By coordinating our programs with other available community resources, we touch the lives of thousands of individuals and families throughout Middlesex County and beyond.







Because of the overwhelming support of the community at large, Middlesex Hospital has been able to continue its legacy of providing meaningful programs and services to you and your neighbors, families, and friends.

Middlesex County, like so many other counties throughout the country, is a rich mix of many different people, young and old, rich and poor, healthy and frail. Middlesex Hospital has always fashioned its Community Benefit programs to meet the many different needs of the people in the many communities it serves. Over the years, community members have responded enthusiastically to Hospital programs to keep

them well, to educate them, and to provide support for their families. Examples include health information dissemination, screenings, sponsorship of special events, and facilitation of support groups.

With the continued interest and involvement of those throughout our community who seek to learn more about their health and improve their lives, Middlesex Hospital will continue to offer its support to help them do so. It is an opportunity we welcome and that we hope has made a difference for many throughout the region.

