



Pharmacy residents Kristen Butler, PharmD and Sarah Hendrick, PharmD.

Kent Hospital announces new pharmacy residency program

WARWICK – Kent Hospital has established a pharmacy residency program affiliated with the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy. The hospital's first class of pharmacists began in July and will take part in a one-year residency offering competency development in a broad area of pharmacy practice.

Kent's pharmacy residency program is one of four post-graduate, year-one pharmacy residency programs in the state of Rhode Island. Pharmacy residents contribute to the hospital's mission by providing patient care rounds, target drug monitoring and patient monitoring.

"We are very excited to announce our new pharmacy residency program which is a tremendous benefit to not only the new pharmacists taking part, but to the clinical staff here at Kent Hospital," said Michael J. Dacey, president and COO, Kent Hospital. "The program allows us to grow as a teaching hospital, while enriching educational opportunities for pharmacists, physicians and nurses. This residency will allow the opportunity for increased pharmacy presence and expanded clinical services within the hospital."

Areas of rotations/learning experiences include: cardiology, critical care, infectious disease, internal medicine, neonatology, psychiatry, outpatient oncology, practice management and drug information. Pharmacists who comprise the program are:

The Kent Hospital Pharmacy Department is comprised of 27 pharmacists, 28 pharmacy technicians and inventory support personnel, and a department director.

For more information on the Kent Hospital Pharmacy Residency Program, contact Michelle Kelley, PharmD, clinical coordinator of pharmacy services, director of Kent Hospital Pharmacy Residency Program, at 401-737-7000 ext. 31762. ❖

Hepatitis C virus-related hospitalizations and deaths rise in the last decade

PROVIDENCE – Rhode Island has seen a significant increase in hepatitis C virus-related hospitalizations and deaths in the last decade, underscoring the importance of diagnosis and treatment, according to a new report released recently by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and the Rhode Island Public Health Institute (RIPHI).

"Building healthy communities and a healthy, thriving Rhode Island means working to eliminate infectious diseases such as hepatitis C," said Director of Health, **NICOLE ALEXANDER-SCOTT, MD, MPH**. "As the first comprehensive epidemiological profile of hepatitis C in Rhode Island, this report will be an invaluable tool in our work in the areas of hepatitis C prevention, testing, diagnosis, and treatment, which together will save lives."

Some key findings of the report include:

- Hepatitis C-related deaths rose from 25 in 2005 to 102 in 2014, based on death certificate data, which may underreport hepatitis C-related deaths.
- The number of inpatient hospitalizations with a primary discharge diagnosis of hepatitis C increased six-fold between 2005 and 2014.
- Clinical and laboratory reports since 2009 suggest significant increases in hepatitis C diagnoses at hospital systems throughout Rhode Island, and screening data from both inpatient and outpatient clinical settings suggest that hepatitis C prevalence is much higher than previously estimated.
- The Rhode Island Department of Corrections has significantly increased its efforts in the areas of screening and treatment since 2013.
- Safe, highly effective hepatitis C medications are now available. These medications create an opportunity to reduce rates of hepatitis C and, cure the virus in a few weeks or months.

"The rise in hepatitis C-related death rates is alarming. However, the good news is, we have medications that can cure people living with hepatitis C," said **DR. AMY NUNN**, Director of RIPHI. "The first step in curing Rhode Islanders of hepatitis C is screening. Both Baby Boomers and anyone who is at high risk, such as people who have used injection drugs or people who received blood transfusions prior to 1992, should ask their physicians to screen them for hepatitis C. People should then seek evaluation and treatment if they have hepatitis C."

RIDOH is working closely with the Rhode Island Department of Corrections and with insurers, including Medicaid, to continue expanding access to hepatitis C treatment for Rhode Islanders who would benefit. ❖