



## NATIONAL COLON CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

FEATURE ARTICLE

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States; yet, it is highly preventable with periodic colonoscopic screening. Most people cringe at the thought of getting a colonoscopy, but the procedure is safe and painless. Some startling facts that might encourage you to get tested include: 1 in 15 people get colon cancer (usually after the age of 50), 150,000 cases are diagnosed in the U.S. each year, and about 55,170 Americans will die from it in 2006, according to the American Cancer Society.

Colonoscopies are of little inconvenience. They take only half an hour and involve a mild anesthesia. After the exam you will likely be able to resume normal activities, but, because of the anesthetic, you should not drive for 24 hours.

The purpose of the colonoscopy is to detect polyps, a growth that projects from the lining of the colon and can develop into cancer. Polyps found during the colonoscopy are removed right then and there. Although benign polyps are commonly found in patients over 50, on rare occasions, malignant polyps are discovered. If cancer is found, surgical resection of the involved bowel is usually advised. "Overall survival for colon cancer

is about 65%, but cure rates as high as 90% can be achieved for early stage tumors," noted Dr. Ridyard, Chief of Medical Staff.

Colonoscopy is not the only method of testing for colon cancer. CT colonoscopy, also known as virtual colonoscopy, involves a 3D scan of the abdomen. This test is non-invasive and does not require anesthesia. However, according to Dr. Kokkat, who specializes in gastroenterology and performs colonoscopies at Windham Hospital, the test requires bowel preparation and is less accurate at detecting polyps smaller than 1 cm. Also, if polyps are found, you are still required to get a colonoscopy to remove them. Flexible sigmoidoscopy, another test, examines only a small section of the colon. Sigmoidoscopy can examine the lowest quarter of the 5-6 foot long colon without the need for anesthesia, but because it is an incomplete exam, it is less commonly used today.

Your chance of developing colon cancer depends on risk factors. One of the most important of these is family history. The website, MedicineNet.com says that if your parent, brother, or sister was diagnosed with colon cancer, you are 2-3 times more likely to develop it yourself. According to Dr. Kokkat, the rule of thumb for colon cancer is to be tested 10 years earlier than your parent's age of diagnosis. Therefore, if your father was diagnosed with colon cancer when he was 49, you should begin being tested at 39.

Other factors that contribute to colon cancer involve diet. A study published in the *British Journal of Cancer Research* found that volunteers who ate exclusively red meat had a higher risk of developing colon cancer. "Bacteria from nitroso compounds on red

meat cause mutations in the cells that line the colon," Dr. Kokkat explained. On the contrary, other studies (cited by WebMD) have found that eating fish regularly lowers your risk of colon cancer. "Taking one low-dose aspirin every day will also lower your risk of developing polyps and cancer," Dr. Kokkat said. "In addition, heavy consumption of alcohol, smoking, obesity, and Crohn's disease, contribute to your risk of colon cancer."

Other dietary advice to prevent colon cancer has been proven somewhat ineffective. Calcium used to be prescribed as a preventative measure, but a study published in the February 2006 *New England Journal of Medicine* shows it does not have an effect on colon cancer. Another study found that eating a low-fat diet does not have an effect on colon cancer but *does* decrease the risk of polyps, according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Public awareness of colon cancer has increased profoundly over the past several years. "People like Katie Couric have really changed the situation a lot and brought awareness about the cancer," Dr. Kokkat said. In March 2000, Couric underwent a colonoscopy live on national television. Her willingness to share her experience on the "Today Show" had a large effect on American colon cancer test rates. An article in the Archives of Internal Medicine cited a national colonoscopy rate increase of more than 20% after the show aired.


Colon cancer can be fatal, but if detected early through colonoscopies or other tests, it is highly curable. Call Windham Hospital's Physician Referral Service today at 456-6770 for the names of providers of this service, especially if you are over 50.

-- Meghan Yost, Communications Intern

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SPRING 2006 ISSUE



NATIONAL  
CANCER SURVIVOR DAY IS  
JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>



Did you know that Windham Hospital hosts an Integrative Health Services Committee, whose mission is to enhance the lives and well-being of our community through an integration of body, mind and spirit? Comprised of an active group of complementary health care practitioners, staff and volunteers, Integrative Health Services currently offers a free, monthly education series at the hospital, entitled, "For the Health of It," plus programs in Meditation, Pet Visitation, Reiki and Yoga.

Integrative Health can be defined as the incorporation of Western or conventional medicine with complementary or alternative healthcare services,

such as massage therapy, acupuncture and nutritional counseling, with a primary focus on enhancing wellness and the healing process. The lecture series, which is held the last Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Bernard Desrosier Room, is designed to inform both health care professionals as well as non-professionals on the health benefits of alternative therapies.

Therapies currently available at the hospital include Reiki, a Japanese healing touch technique, and Pet Visitation. Integrated Services will offer massage therapy at WCMH beginning in May of 2006, while the hospital's Sleep Center is exploring uses of acupuncture for the future. See [www.wcmh.org/IntegrativeHealth](http://www.wcmh.org/IntegrativeHealth) For more information about Windham Hospital's Integrative Services.

For unbiased reporting on current research regarding the benefits of alternative therapies, go to [www.ConsumerReports.org/healthaccess](http://www.ConsumerReports.org/healthaccess).

## SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE!



*John and Lucille Reynolds pose on the hospital steps on their wedding day in 1955.*

Mr. and Mrs. John Reynolds of Mansfield celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on July 30, 2005. Their 50 years together began with their wedding in a Coventry church, followed by a photo session on the steps of Windham Hospital! In a recent interview, Lucille Reynolds explained that she had worked at the hospital prior to their marriage, and—being a hospital—many people were working on the Saturday they "tied the knot," in 1955, and were therefore, unable to attend the wedding. Lucille's co-workers lamented that they would really love to see the bride and groom on their special day. "So we stopped by the hospital so our friends could help us celebrate," says Mrs. Reynolds. "Along the way, we decided to take some pictures there."

Employed by WCMH from 1950 to 1956, Mrs. Reynolds worked in the accounting office, a position she held until the birth of the first of her two daughters. "I worked right up until two days before she was born," she states with pride evident in her voice. One of the earliest telecommuters, Mrs. Reynolds says, "Later, I worked from home doing some of the hospital's bookwork. They'd drop off and pick up the files from me."

Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds have remained in the area, happily healthy, though no longer connected to the hospital. In recent months, both John and Lucille have had occasions to visit the hospital as patients—and their visits here have been quite positive. Throughout several cataract operations and knee replacements, Windham has been their hospital of choice. In March, Mrs. Reynolds returned to the hospital "for an eye operation." She was impressed with the friendly and helpful atmosphere she encountered, and mentioned her impressions to her doctor, Patricia Caton Reardon, M.D. "The people were all so nice; I didn't know anyone at the hospital any more, and I was nervous about the procedures, but the people I met made me feel at home and helped me relax. It was truly wonderful."

To celebrate their anniversary, Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds sailed on the riverboat *Mississippi Queen*, from St. Louis, Missouri, to St. Paul, Minnesota, renewed their church vows, and enjoyed a small party hosted by family and friends. We wish the Reynolds all the best!



*John and Lucille Reynolds in 2005.*



# KIDS' ZONE!



## KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY FAIR

Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> 10 - 2

FREE admission, at the Mansfield Community Center

Demonstrations, informational presentations, refreshments, safety courses, entertainment, fingerprinting, infant/child massage and much more.

## FREE CAR SEAT CLINICS

4 of every 5 car seats are used incorrectly...  
be **SURE** yours isn't among them!

Have your child's car seat checked free of charge by an experienced car seat technician at these locations (hours of operation: 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM).

- May 6th - North Windham Fire House, North Windham
- May 27th - Columbia Fire House, Columbia
- June 10th - Champagne Chevrolet, Willimantic
- June 24th - at ACCESS Agency, Willimantic

Sponsored by the  
Windham County Chapter  
of CT SAFE KIDS  
and Windham Hospital

For further information or directions,  
please contact Windham SAFE KIDS,  
at 456-6978 or visit [safekids@wcmh.org](mailto:safekids@wcmh.org).



# WINDHAM HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENTS

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

A new Outpatient and Emergency Services facility, the introduction of a Hospitalist program, and a new relationship with Jefferson Radiology are all indications that Windham Hospital is undergoing revitalization. As hospitals in our region and across the country struggle to remain financially viable, Windham Hospital had a small surplus last year and continues to provide a range of services that are needed for people in our region. This is no easy task. Small community hospitals like Windham contribute to the health and welfare of the region, yet reimbursements from the federal and state government do not fully cover the cost of care. It becomes critical to supplement the income from private insurers and reimbursement programs with private philanthropy.

Thanks to a long-standing tradition of caring for our community, Windham Hospital goes beyond its mission to provide a range of programs that benefit our community. A prenatal clinic for women with no insurance, free breast and cervical cancer screening services, pregnancy and childbirth related classes, are all offered to meet the needs of women and families.

School-based health clinics are operated at both Windham Middle and Windham High School to help students in grades 5-12 with

decision making about their health, relationships, nutritional and psychological counseling, as well as providing well-child exams. Windham Hospital serves as the lead agency for SAFEKIDS Windham County, provides free monthly lectures on Integrative Health programs, and offers a variety of support groups and educational services to the community.

In 1930, at the height of the depression, this community rallied to build Windham Community Memorial Hospital. We now need the same level of support to ensure that the hospital can move forward with all of the programs and initiatives that keep our community healthy. The Emergency & Outpatient Expansion Project will be completed this summer with dedication activities planned for the week of September 18, 2006. We hope that you and your neighbors can proudly state that you played a role in the success of this project. A pledge envelope is included for your use. If you have already made a gift to the capital campaign, pass it on to a friend! We need everyone's participation to keep pace with the advances in technology and to provide a sound healthcare infrastructure for the future.

For questions or more information on how you can help, contact Mona Friedland, VP, Development and Community Relations at 456-6911 or [mfriedland@wcmh.org](mailto:mfriedland@wcmh.org). To make a donation online, go to [www.windhamhospital.org](http://www.windhamhospital.org) and click on the **Donate Now** button.



## LEAVE A LEGACY®

Windham Hospital is part of a statewide public awareness effort to promote charitable giving through wills and estate plans called LEAVE A LEGACY®. For more information about establishing a bequest to benefit Windham Hospital, contact your financial advisor or Mona Friedland, VP Development & Community Relations at 456-6911, or visit the Leave a Legacy Connecticut website, [www.leavealegacyct.org](http://www.leavealegacyct.org).

## Join Our Legislative Network!

Are you concerned about the future of healthcare in our nation? Do you care about the ability of Windham Hospital to receive reimbursements that are fair and equitable? Would you like to be more involved in the democratic process?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you may want to join others who have signed up for Windham Hospital's Legislative Network. We will keep you abreast of the most current issues facing healthcare institutions today and provide sample letters and contacts at the state and federal level. Call us with your contact information at 456-6700.

# EVENTS

## 11th Annual GOLF CLASSIC

with Scott Gray, WTIC Radio Sports Director,  
Honorary Chairman

sponsored by 

to benefit the  
Emergency Department & Outpatient Services  
Expansion Project

**Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>**  
10:30 AM Shotgun Start

**Tunxis Plantation Country Club**  
89 Town Farm Road, Farmington, CT

To register online, go to [www.wcmh.org](http://www.wcmh.org) or contact Sue Seney at [sseney@wcmh.org](mailto:sseney@wcmh.org) or 456-6849 for more information.

## WINE & BEER TASTING EVENING

featuring potables from  
Connecticut vineyards & breweries

to benefit the  
Emergency Department &  
Outpatient Services Expansion Project

June 14<sup>th</sup> 4:30-7:00 PM

Hors d'oeuvres, Baronet Coffee and  
Hosmer Mt. Soda also featured

For an invitation or more information, contact  
Shawn Maynard at [smaynard@wcmh.org](mailto:smaynard@wcmh.org) or  
456-6861.



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