AT A GLANCE

• 245-bed hospital with a 1,400-person staff, including 700 physicians
• A member of Northwell Health, the largest health care provider in New York State
• A 2017-18 US News & World Report “Best Regional Hospital” in Colon Cancer, COPD, Heart Failure, and Hip Surgery

HOW NORTHERN WESTCHESTER HOSPITAL BECAME A LEADER IN COMPASSIONATE, EVIDENCE-BASED CARE

For more than 100 years, Northern Westchester Hospital has served the southern New York community with innovative, empathetic care. Opening its doors in 1916, the hospital soon became a treatment hub during the height of the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918. Since then, NWH has evolved over a century to serve as a guiding light in the person-centered care movement — picking up innumerable awards and accolades in the process.

Seeking to bolster staff engagement and satisfaction while continuing to provide cutting-edge care to patients, families, and the greater community, NWH looked to hospitals excelling at these measures for inspiration. They found that model in Griffin Hospital, a Planetree Certified organization in Connecticut. Amazed by the enthusiasm and dedication Griffin staff had for their person-centered care philosophy, NWH decided to bring the Planetree model of care back home to New York.

A PLANETREE PERSON-CENTERED CARE CASE STUDY

Northern Westchester Hospital Achieves 37-Point Gain in “Likelihood to Recommend”
The Path to Excellence in Person-Centered Certification

In 2002, Northern Westchester Hospital became a Planetree affiliate organization, beginning the Planetree Certification process in 2006. During its initial information sessions, Planetree articulated the meaning of person-centered care and invited NWH staff to map those principles to their own values and experiences. Immediately, hospital leadership — including the CEO, CMO, and CFO — saw the passion that NWH had for the Planetree philosophy of care and eagerness to meet its criteria. That leadership buy-in empowered Northern Westchester to charge ahead in pursuit of Certification.

The hospital’s commitment to evidence-based care and patient outcomes resulted in a rigorous, process redesign methodology, a data-driven framework for evaluating and optimizing each of its person-centered care initiatives — always in partnership with patients. These initiatives include pet therapy, music therapy, and a Food is Care program that launched Northern Westchester to the top 10% of hospitals nationwide in terms of patient satisfaction with meal service. NWH also established The Ken Hamilton Caregivers Center, where dedicated social workers and volunteer caregiver coaches provide support for families and patient caregivers.

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT, GLOBAL CONTEXT

Northern Westchester has met with Planetree organizations from Argentina to Australia, placing their person-centered practices in the context of the global healthcare community and bringing domestic and international best practices back home to NWH. However, many of the hospital’s most successful initiatives have come from members of the local community through Patient and Family Advisory Councils and the Patient-Centered Innovation Fund, an internal grant program created to fund imaginative new ideas that benefit patients and their caregivers — programs suggested by staff, patients, families, and a team of 300 local volunteers.

These programs included the hospital’s integrative therapy practice, the Aranow Art Cart — where patients can choose from a selection of art, turning their hospital room into a warm personal space that promotes a sense of wellness — and the Behavioral Health Unit Comfort Room.

In 2007, Northern Westchester earned Planetree Certification for Excellence in Person-Centered Care with Distinction. One of the first five hospitals nationwide to become Planetree Certified, NWH has since been recertified with distinction three times.
Person-Centered Care Outcomes

Since implementing their forward-thinking person-centered care program, Northern Westchester Hospital has seen significant gains across several HCAHPS patient satisfaction metrics. Most notable is the 37-point improvement NWH achieved in “Likelihood to Recommend” since becoming Planetree Certified — while in 2006, the hospital ranked in the 56th percentile, NWH was in the 93rd percentile in 2016, and is projected to sustain or succeed that achievement in 2017.

In only one year since redesigning its person-centered care model, NWH saw a 9.3% increase in patient-reported caregiver responsiveness, as well as a 5.9% increase in nurse communication metrics and a 5.8% increase in medication communication. Northern Westchester is also the first hospital in New York to receive a 5-Star patient satisfaction rating from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

“The Planetree philosophy helps staff and physicians appreciate the importance of meaningful patient and family interactions to quality outcomes. At NWH, patients and families are active participants in their care, and their unique preferences and values are respected and incorporated in the goals for recovery — this is the essence of Planetree and truly what healthcare is all about.”

— Maria Hale, Vice President of Patient Advocacy and Patient Centered Support Services

In as a nationally recognized leader for patient and family engagement, Northern Westchester Hospital is committed to the heart of our mission: the delivery of high quality patient-centered care. Our goal in creating innovative programs and services is to fulfill the needs of our patients and their families. But the implementation of these programs would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our staff, physicians, volunteers, and trustees, as well as a unique partnership with our robust patient and family advisory councils — all of which Planetree has helped us to nurture.”

— Joel Seligman, President and CEO

Be The Person-Centered Change You Want to See

Person-centered care is more than just healthcare best practice — it is the future of wellness. To bring these outcomes to your own healthcare facility, or to learn more about the process of becoming Planetree Person-Centered Care Certified, contact Planetree today.

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