

## Hospital touts community commitment

Waterbury CEO cites 'we' effort after 1st year of for-profit status

**BY HARRISON CONNERY**

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**WATERBURY** — Waterbury Hospital CEO Peter J. Adamo is on a mission to quell any remaining vestiges of community concern that the hospital's for-profit status has undermined its commitment to the community.

Commuters driving along Route 8 and Interstate 84 may have noticed digital billboards showing the hospital's new network logo, which it debuted last month with a new slogan: The Power Of We.

"I would love to think that 'we' extends to all of Waterbury and that 'we' begin to do things for each other, not only when it comes to your needs when you're sick but what else can we do for the region, and it's wide open," Adamo said.

Adamo said the slogan reflects his commitment to *See HOSPITAL* , Page 7A



**Registered nurse Pat Kinzly talks to Peter J. Adamo, president and CEO of Waterbury Hospital, about the cardiac catheterization lab at the hospital on Thursday.**

**HOSPITAL:** Logo backs campaign

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work with the community to improve health care services and while helping to boost the economy.

"I think as a 2,000-person employer with a forward thinking administrative team we're only as good as the region's economy and if we can do more to build business, we can do more to help each other," he said. "The power of we is a really powerful and compelling theme and that's why we've introduced it."

According to a segment of the 2016 economic benefit report provided by the hospital, Waterbury Hospital spent about \$11.1 million on community benefits and more than \$10 million on financial assistance and unreimbursed Medicaid services in the first year of Prospect Medical Holding's ownership.

Hospital records show the company also contributed \$178,903 in community building activities, raising the hospital's total community benefits spending by just over \$1 million that first year overseeing the former Greater Waterbury Health Network.

The state Office of Health Care Access mandated that Prospect continue the community benefits and building programs for three years when it acquired the hospital in 2016 for \$100 million, of which \$55 million came in the form of pledged upgrades to the hospital and its infrastructure. Prospect is required to raise its community spending by 1 percent each year during the three-year period. According to hospital records, the Greater Waterbury Health Network lost \$53 million over the two years before the acquisition.

The Naugatuck Valley Project, an organization of religious congregations and labor, tenant and small business associations, is concerned that Prospect will discontinue its charitable and community giving once the terms dictated by the Office of Health Care Access expire.

"I don't think there's necessarily a concern with for-profit versus nonprofit status per se," said Richard Natalie, a member of the NVP's hospital accountability committee, who added that the group is nervous about what could happen after the terms of the deal expire. "In the state of Connecticut there is a lack of clarity around how those types of things are governed."

Waterbury Hospital spokeswoman Patricia Charvat said the hospital will continue its community investments after the three-year mandatory period is over.

Angela Mattie, a professor at Quinnipiac University medical school and board member at Saint Mary's Hospital, said hospitals are a driving force economically. Saint Mary's, across Waterbury, has also been acquired by a larger entity — Trinity Health Of New England, which is a part of the nation's largest nonprofit hospital operator, Trinity Health.

"Specifically for towns that have hospitals, they're one of the largest employers," she said. "In addition to providing health care services, something that people generally overlook is the hospital plays a big role in the economy."

Statewide, hospitals employ 199,000 people at a cost of \$14.7 billion, according to the Connecticut Hospital Association's 2017 economic impact report. They spend another \$5 billion in goods and services. Waterbury Hospital employs 2,104 employees at a cost of \$128 million and pays \$6 million in taxes, according to Charvat.

"Being bought by a big company provides a fusion of funding and expertise, so it's not a bad thing, it's actually a very good thing," Quinnipiac's Mattie said. "That creates dollars to improve the brick and mortar, which creates jobs."

The CHA report states that hospitals spent \$806 million on buildings and equipment in 2015, which generated a total of \$1.6 billion in economic activity. Waterbury Hospital has announced renovation plans for its emergency department and maternity wings, projects Charvat said are expected to exceed \$10 million combined and which she believes will be awarded to local contractors. The hospital recently built an 8,900-square-foot treatment facility in Southbury that will employ 30 to 35 people when it opens in the coming weeks.

Adamo is hoping that bringing Waterbury Hospital and its four affiliates under a unifying logo will help convince the general public that they don't need to leave the city to receive quality care, even if it means patients going to local physicians or Saint Mary's Hospital.

"The total cost to the system is less if you stay here, it's better and it does more for the local economy," he said.

Adamo believes that the general public is unaware that Waterbury Hospital is connected to affiliates — Access Rehab Centers, Cardiology Associates, Alliance Medical Group and VNA Health at Home — because the logos used until January didn't resemble each other. The new logos include a common font, colors and the words "Waterbury Health" are included in each.

"There are some people who would like to think that because we're a for-profit that somehow or another we're going to abandon the community and no longer provide those kinds of things," Adamo said. "We'd be foolish not to. If we abandon this community it would be a lot like a farmer who stops watering his own land."

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