



*“Everyone works as a team,
and everyone has so much
compassion.”*

— Meka, Leever patient

See her story at leeverstories.com

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Survivors

FIVE YEARS AGO WE OPENED THE DOORS OF THE HAROLD LEEVER REGIONAL CANCER CENTER with great hope and anticipation. Today, patients come through those doors with the same feelings – great hope for the future and anticipation of the journey ahead.

Their hope lies in our extraordinary staff, our state-of-the-art technology, and our dedication to treating each and every patient as an individual on a personal journey toward another tomorrow. They anticipate the sense of community, caring, and support that are the hallmarks of The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center.

Our mission is to create and foster a healing environment not just for cancer patients, but for their loved ones. We are a resource center, an education center, a treatment facility, and a community center. We are a beacon of hope, a port in the storm. We measure success one patient at a time; their stories are our history.

Our fifth anniversary is just a point in time, but it marks a time of reflection. It is a time to look back and revisit the lives we've touched, to see the promise that has become a reality and the hope that has been fulfilled. We asked members of the Leever Cancer Center family to share their stories with us. They are survivors' stories. They are stories of hope. They are our story.



Meka: It's all about the people

Meka was a young mother in her twenties when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. “I was in shock,” Meka recalls. “I thought, ‘What are these people talking about?’” Before long, “these people” were like family to Meka, and what they were talking about was

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Survivors

Continued from page 1

anything and everything Meka needed to work through the process of healing.

“They really talk to you and explain things to you. It makes it a whole lot easier to have people sit and laugh with you and talk to you and not treat you like ‘just a patient.’”

Although her treatment has ended, Meka still visits the Leever staff. “Even now I go up there,” Meka explained. “We have fun, we joke around. Dr. Sinning and Michelle Purcaro, the nurses Jan and Judy and Peg and Melissa – she’s the social worker – everyone works as a team, and everyone has so much compassion.”

For more survivor stories, please visit www.leevestories.com or visit our main website at www.leevecancercenter.org and click on the survivor story link.



THE MISSION OF THE HAROLD LEEVER REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

is to create and foster a healing environment for the care of people with cancer and their loved ones, recognizing that the patient and family are the center of every interaction.

Early detection saves lives

THE SECOND MOST COMMON CAUSE OF CANCER DEATH IS ALSO THE MOST PREVENTABLE.

That was the message delivered by Dr. Thomas A. Rockoff, Naugatuck Valley Gastroenterology Consultants, Naugatuck Valley Endoscopy Center (pictured right), and Dr. J. Alexander Palesty, Department of Surgery Assistant Director, Program in Surgery, Saint Mary’s Hospital (pictured left), during the latest installment of our *CancerAware* series, “Current Concepts in the Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Colorectal Cancer.”



Here’s what you need to know:

- ▶ Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S., affecting both men and women equally, especially over age 50.
- ▶ Colorectal cancer can often be prevented. Regular screening tests can find precancerous colorectal polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer.
- ▶ The American Cancer Society recommends regular colorectal cancer screenings for both men and women with no known risk factors beginning at age 50. Screenings may include yearly stool blood tests and a flexible colonoscopy every five years.
- ▶ People with a family history of colorectal polyps, cancer, or other risk factors, like inflammatory bowel disease, should talk to their doctor about scheduling screenings at an earlier age and with greater frequency.
- ▶ Many insurance plans, including Medicare, help pay for colorectal cancer screening.
- ▶ A healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk of developing colorectal cancer. Diets high in vegetables and fruits have been linked with a lower risk of colon cancer, and diets high in processed and red meats have been linked with a higher risk. The American Cancer Society recommends that people try to maintain a healthy weight throughout life by balancing what they eat with physical activity.



Reflections Boutique

For many, the diagnosis of cancer is the first step in a long journey. Each journey is a deeply personal one, often marked by self-discovery. For some, self-discovery begins when the mirror offers a reflection they don't quite recognize.

While cancer treatment has changed dramatically in the past few decades, some treatment side effects remain the same. Among the most common is hair loss from chemotherapy.

"When you're first diagnosed, even when you have your surgery, it doesn't seem quite real," recalls cancer survivor Dr. Clare Ventre. "When you go through the chemo and all of a sudden your hair is gone, you think, 'This is really happening.'"

Like many cancer patients, Dr. Ventre collected hats, wigs, and scarves during her treatment for breast cancer. As her reflection changed, her collection grew, and the Reflections Boutique at The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center was born.

Founded by Dr. Ventre and her husband, Craig Carragan, Reflections Boutique is a "lending library" of sorts. Women experiencing hair loss due to cancer treatment are invited to borrow pieces from the boutique, and encouraged to consider donating them back when they are done for use by another woman embarking on a similar journey. As many as 150 wigs in different styles, shapes, and color, are now available in the boutique, along with a wide variety of hats and other head coverings. Much of the inventory was donated by local wig shops, individuals in the community, and the American Cancer Society; new donations are always welcome. Inventory is evaluated monthly, and new wigs are purchased as needed.

The Reflections Boutique is a community resource open to everyone, not just HLRCC patients. American Cancer Society volunteers are available to help women select wigs if they choose; women are also welcome to close the boutique door and try wigs on in private. There are no fees to pay and no forms to fill out; Dr. Ventre simply asks that women sign the Reflections Boutique book when they visit. The book contains both expressions of gratitude and reflections on the journey that is cancer.

For more information or to make a donation to the boutique, please call The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center at 203-575-5555.



American Cancer Society volunteer Theresa Lombardo assists a patient with her wig selection.

Celebrating Five Years of Hope and Promise

“The true measure of your worth includes all the benefits others have gained from your success.”

— Cullen Hightower

For five years The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center has measured its success one day, one individual, one story at a time. It seemed only fitting, then, that our survivors' stories would be central to the celebration of our fifth anniversary. Through a series of print ads, billboards, and web-based media, six individuals shared their stories of hope and inspiration and, in doing so, crafted our story — the story of The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center.

On June 10th more than 100 people gathered to celebrate these stories, these individuals, and so much more. Our **Fifth Year Celebration and Donor Thank You Reception** was a time to reflect, a time to celebrate, and a time to look forward with optimism and with confidence.

Curtis V. Titus, Chairman, HLRCC Board of Directors, kicked off the celebration by thanking members of the medical community, the Leever Cancer Center's board, corporate sponsors, and individuals whose dedication and support not only made Harold Leever's dream of a community cancer center in Greater Waterbury a reality, but have ensured its future as the premier cancer facility in the region. The success of the Leever Cancer Center, Mr. Titus noted, represents the remarkable union of the area's two hospitals coming together for a common cause.

HLRCC Executive Director Kevin Kniery spoke to that cause, so clearly articulated in our Mission Statement.

“We have brought hope, care, and healing to the Greater Waterbury community,” Mr. Kniery told the crowd. “And with a patient satisfaction rating of 95 percent, we have done so successfully and with compassion.”

And we will continue to do so, always mindful of our mission. To that end, HLRCC Radiation Oncologist Dr. Jeffrey Bitterman introduced plans to upgrade the Leever Cancer Center's two linear accelerators, solidifying our position as the area's most technologically advanced cancer care provider.

Five years, six stories, one celebration. We move forward now with hope and confidence, knowing that there will be many more years, many more stories, and many, many celebrations to come.

Opposite page top row, left to right:

1: Kevin Kniery, Executive Director

2: HLRCC Commemorative Book given out at the event: “Hope Lives Here”

3: “Hope” wine served at the event

4: Candace Conway and Holly Bria, RNs from Medical Oncology & Hematology

Second row, left to right:

5: Curtis V. Titus, HLRCC Chairman of the Board, at the podium

6: Jeffrey Bitterman, M.D., Radiation Oncologist at HLRCC

Third row, left to right:

7: Judy Feliciano, HLRCC Staff, and Bernard Percarpio, M.D., Radiation Oncologist HLRCC

8: Burton Albert, HLRCC Board Member

9: Carolyn Washington, Deborah Parkinson, Operations Manager HLRCC, Eleanor Green

Fourth row, left to right:

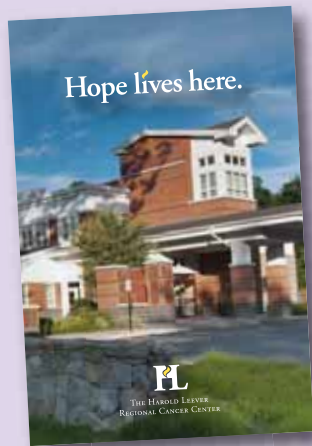
10: Guests Sandy Galper, Murray Galper, Cy Coda, Belle Coda

11: HLRCC Staff: Kevin Khadivi, Ph.D., Diana Spahiu, Judy Feliciano, Karen Bailey, Cheryl Guetens, Melissa Seres, Gayle Crowley, Janet Policano, Carole Gizzi





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Going Organic

Is It Worth the Price?

YOU GO TO THE SUPERMARKET FOR YOUR WEEKLY GROCERIES and find yourself in the produce aisle. Scratching your head, you wonder if you should splurge on the organic apples or save some money and get the shiny non-organic ones. The process continues as you work your way through the supermarket, with every aisle and every food item appearing to come in organic and non-organic forms, even candy bars. Is the extra cost worth it?

Before you empty your wallet, you need to know what “organic” means and when it does or does not make sense to spend the extra money. Although eating organic may conjure up visions of pastoral scenes with sunny skies and peaceful music, the organic food industry has become a major market force. It may be helpful for you to make your decisions based on some important information.



What is “organic”?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture organic seal means that a food has been grown, harvested and processed according to national organic standards, with restrictions on pesticides, hormones and antibiotics.

Is “organic” the only thing to look for?

Buying organic used to mean that you were purchasing foods grown with environmentally friendly farming methods. However, when you buy organic foods that have been shipped across the country, there is a considerable amount of fuel and other air pol-

lutants involved in their transport, which, according to some critics, defeats the purpose. Instead, you should **look for organic foods from a farm that is local and sustainable**, which eliminates the environmental issues and promotes the ideal vision of what organic should be.

Organic shopping advice

- ▶ For your health, buy organic when you can, whether locally grown or not.
- ▶ For the environment, buy local produce in season and plan your meals around what’s available.
- ▶ Search out farmer’s markets, co-ops and local farms that sell direct to consumers. For help finding them, visit www.localharvest.com.
- ▶ Spend your money on the organic versions of produce most likely to contain pesticide residues, coined “the dirty dozen” according to the nonprofit Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org) – see list at right. These results have been published in a report entitled “Report Card: Pesticides in Produce.” EWG

is a not-for-profit environmental research organization dedicated to improving public health and protecting the environment by reducing pollution in air, water and food.

- ▶ Think of the overall healthfulness of the product, rather than just looking at whether or not it is organic. For example, organic gummy bears are just as high in sugar as regular gummy bears, and should still be avoided.
- ▶ Read the labels. Avoid foods loaded with sugar and saturated fats, even if they are “organic.”

Bottom Line

The one time when it does *not* make sense to eat organic is when organic is not available! Eating fruits and vegetables, no matter how they are grown, is important for reducing cancer risk.

Other important definitions

100% Organic: No synthetic ingredients are allowed by law.

Organic: At least 95% of ingredients are organically produced.



CORN, TOMATO AND EDAMAME SALAD WITH CILANTRO DRESSING

Combine in a large bowl:

- 3 cups cooked corn kernels (fresh or frozen; avoid canned)
- 1/3 – 1/2 cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup shelled Edamame (green soy beans found in freezer of health food aisle)
- 3 medium tomatoes, halved, seeded and chopped

In blender or food processor, puree until smooth:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup (or more) chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup (or more) chopped fresh mint
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 2 tsp packed brown sugar
- 1 garlic clove
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

Just before serving, pour dressing over corn mixture and toss.

Makes 6 servings

Made with Organic Ingredients: At least 70% of ingredients are organic; the other 30% are from a list approved by the USDA.

Free-Range or Free-Roaming: Animals had an undetermined amount of daily outdoor access. This label does not provide much information about the product.

Natural or All Natural: Doesn't mean organic. No standard definition, except for meat and poultry products, which may not contain any artificial flavoring, colors, chemical preservatives, or synthetic ingredients. Claims aren't checked.

Many people are searching for that one change in their diet that will "prevent" cancer. Although diet is thought to be responsible for 30% of all cancers, it is difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint one specific food that can cause or prevent cancer. Experts feel that it is a healthy lifestyle that can help optimize one's long-term health, along with regular checkups with your doctor.

In summary, the eight recommendations for cancer prevention from the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) Second Expert Report include:

- ▶ Be as lean as possible without becoming underweight.
- ▶ Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day.
- ▶ Avoid sugary drinks. Limit consumption of energy-dense foods (particularly processed foods high in added sugar, low in fiber, or high in fat).
- ▶ Eat more of a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes such as beans. Current recommendations range from 5 to 9 servings a day.
- ▶ Limit consumption of red meats (such as beef, pork and lamb) and avoid processed meats.
- ▶ If consumed at all, limit alcoholic drinks to 2 for men and 1 for women a day.
- ▶ Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt (sodium).
- ▶ Don't rely on supplements to protect against cancer.

Be Aware!

12 most contaminated foods [if possible, buy organic]:

Apples	Peaches
Bell Peppers	Pears
Celery	Potatoes
Cherries	Red Raspberries
Imported Grapes	Spinach
Nectarines	Strawberries

12 least contaminated foods:

Asparagus	Kiwi
Avocados	Mangos
Bananas	Onions
Broccoli	Papaya
Cauliflower	Pineapples
Corn (sweet)	Peas (sweet)



If you have nutrition questions that you would like answered, contact our nutritionist.

Karen Sabbath, MS, RD

203-575-5510

ksabbath@leevercancercenter.org

Relay For Life® Celebrate. Remember.

Each year, across the nation, for one 24-hour period, entire communities join together in the fight against cancer. This year, The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center, in conjunction with Saint Mary's Health System and Waterbury Hospital Health Center, led the local charge as the Excalibur sponsor of the Greater Waterbury Relay for Life® event.

Fifty-four teams took to the track at Waterbury's Crosby High School beginning at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 7th. More than 300 participants walked to celebrate their personal victories over cancer, to remember a friend or loved one touched by the disease, or simply to join the fight against cancer. The event, which featured a survivors' lap, a luminaria ceremony, activities for children, and live music, raised more than \$236,000 for the American Cancer Society.

"The event is important to the Leever Cancer Center," explained Deborah Parkinson, Team Leever Co-Captain and Operations Manager at The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center. "We have a strong presence there – a big tent, many staff members and their families. We see many of our former patients there. They look for us, we hug, we catch up; we see them in a different context than when they were patients. It is really a very special time."

Relay for Life is the signature event of the American Cancer Society. It began in 1985 with one man's decision to spend 24 hours running on a stadium track in Tacoma, Washington, in an effort to raise money for the local chapter of the American Cancer Society. With more than 300 friends and family watching, Dr. Gordy Klatt ran 83 miles and raised \$27,000 in sponsorship dollars. Now, more than 20 years later, it is hard to find a community in the United States that is not part of a Relay network.

"It is a very emotional 24 hours," said Melissa Seres, Team Leever Co-Captain and Social Worker at The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center, "and such a meaningful event for the entire community."

For more information about Relay for Life, please visit www.relayforlife.org or contact the American Cancer Society.



Below: Team Leever teammates:
Karen Martin, APRN and Dianne Bedard



Team Leever banner at
the Team Leever tent

Team Leever teammates, left to right:
 Peter Sanchez, Joseph Ravalese III, M.D., Kert Sabbath, M.D.,
 Kevin Kniery, HLRCC Executive Director,
 and Jeffrey Bitterman, M.D.



Fight Back.



Above: Teams prepare to walk for 24 hours!



A big thumbs-up from survivor Al Joyell, Ph.D.



Team Leever teammates: Rae Varrone and Karen Bailey

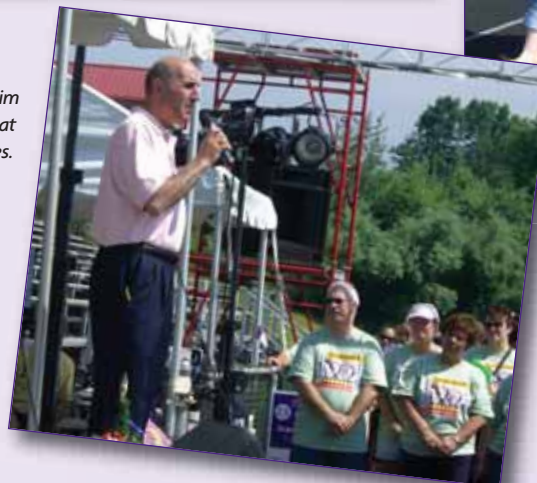


Above: Survivor lap



Team Leever teammates: Holly Bria, Kert Sabbath, M.D.,
 Karen Sabbath and Melissa Seres.

Right: State Representative Selim
 Noujaim gives welcoming remarks at
 the opening ceremonies.



A Community of Caring

The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center wishes to express its appreciation and a sincere thank you to its neighbors and friends by recognizing the spirit and hard work of the members of our community in fulfilling the Mission of the Leever Cancer Center.

In Memory of Bianca Hernandez-Melendez:

HLRCC is a grateful beneficiary of funds raised this fall during the **second annual Bianca Hernandez-Melendez**

Benefit Golf Tournament and Yankee Candle Sale.



Bianca Hernandez-Melendez

Remembering Diane Burr:

Close to 200 runners participated in the Sixth Annual Diane Burr 5K Flag Run last fall. Proceeds from the event go to the **Diane Burr Memorial Fund**, a generous HLRCC benefactor.

A Close-Knit Community: The clickety-clack of knitting needles means good news for The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center. Our patients find comfort in the **prayer shawls** donated by **Our Lady of Mount Carmel Knitting Ministry**, and in the **mini prayer shawls** crafted by members of the **Mill Plain Union Church**. **Carol Kellogg's** knit hats have found a home in our Reflections Boutique, along with the **crocheted hats and scarves** donated by **Julie Clifford and the Curves of Bethlehem family, Elim Park Knitting Group, Evelyn Hallock, Germaine McGrath, Telecomm Pioneers Life Membership Group of CT, Prayer Shawl Ministry at the Immaculate and Knitters in Prayer**. Special thanks to all for these gracious gifts of time and talent.

In the Spirit of Giving: The Village at East Farms sponsored a “**Wreath Stroll**” to benefit HLRCC during the 2007 holiday season. Local sponsors decorated and donated the wreaths, which were auctioned off to event patrons.

Little Town, Big Heart: Bethlehem residents and business owners pulled together recently to raise funds for HLRCC. **Julie Clifford**, owner of Curves of Bethlehem, collected artwork, crafts, and merchant donations for an HLRCC benefit raffle held at the Bethlehem facility.

The Art of Caring

(right): Students from Ms. Kara Zarchin's Mid English “A” and “E” Blocks at Watertown's Taft School filled the HLRCC lobby with “get well” posters and cards, bringing personal touches of youthful joy and caring to the Center.





Dr. Percarpio Named ACRO Fellow

The American College of Radiation Oncology (ACRO) awarded Fellowship to Bernard Percarpio, MD, a Radiation Oncologist at HLRCC, during their 18th Annual Meeting in February. The Bethesda, MD-based organization is a professional society dedicated to ensuring success in the day-to-day practice of radiation

oncology. ACRO promotes the highest-quality care for radiation therapy patients through education, responsible socioeconomic advocacy, and the integration of science and technology into clinical practice. Dr. Percarpio's Fellowship award follows ten years of continuous ACRO membership and a rigorous application and review process.

A Legacy of Generosity

The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center will keep pace with advances in cancer treatment in part to a generous gift from The Leever Foundation. Founded by Harold Leever in 1991 to benefit Greater Waterbury, the Foundation continues to improve the health, education, and welfare of area residents through their financial support of diverse interests and organizations throughout the community. The Foundation's gift will help bring two new linear accelerators, equipment used in radiation therapy, to HLRCC.

The future is now

PET/CT (Positron Emission Tomography and Computed Tomography) is a unique, state-of-the-art diagnostic tool that helps physicians effectively pinpoint the source of cancer. A non-invasive test, this powerful tool combines metabolic and anatomic imaging, providing a more complete picture and making it easier for your doctor to diagnose problems, determine the extent of disease, prescribe treatment, and track progress. The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center is widely recognized as a leader in the use of PET/CT scan technology. We conduct PET/CT scans every weekday, Monday through Friday, usually the same week they are requested; most results are available within 24 hours.

To find out more about PET/CT scans at HLRCC, call us at 203-575-5501, or visit www.leeverpet.com.

Aware!

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We encourage your feedback.
If there is a cancer topic you
would like covered, to respond to
an article you've read, or to be put
on our mailing list, please call
203-575-5555 or email:
teamleever@leevercancercenter.org



The Right Team. Right Here.



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Thyroid Cancer Support Group Forming

LOCAL PHYSICIANS DR. JEROME SUGAR OF EAR, NOSE, & THROAT ASSOCIATES OF WATERBURY AND DR. BEATRIZ OLSON, specializing in Endocrinology and Metabolism, left no stone unturned during their recent program, "Everything You Wanted to Know About Thyroid Cancer, But Were Afraid to Ask."

More than 60 people attended the May 22nd event, held at The Harold Leever Regional Cancer Center as part of our *CancerAware* educational series. Drs. Sugar and Olson presented information and answered questions about the diagnosis and treatment of thyroid cancer.

The event also served as a kickoff for a new thyroid cancer support group; all meetings will be held at HLRCC. If you are interested in joining or would like more information, please call 203-575-5564 or email dparkinson@leevercancercenter.org.

"There are always flowers for those who want to see them."

— Henri Matisse



THE HAROLD LEEVER
REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

1075 Chase Parkway
Waterbury, CT 06708



Community Events & Monthly Support Groups

FAMILY NIGHT: Wednesday, November 5 at MidState Medical Center
A free workshop for parents or caregivers with cancer, their partners, and their children ages 5-12, contact Melissa Seres, LCSW, 203-575-5511

CARING KIDS: For upcoming Fall 2008 dates, contact Melissa Seres, LCSW at 203-575-5511

SURVIVORS CELEBRATION: November 2008, date to be announced

WOMAN TO WOMAN BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 7 PM – 9 PM, contact Theresa Lombardo at 860-274-2200

BRAVE AT HEART BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, 2nd Wednesday, 7 PM – 9 PM, contact Anne Pringle at 203-910-7582

CT MULTIPLE MYELOMA FIGHTERS SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, 3rd Tuesday, 6 PM – 8 PM, contact Robin Tuohy at 203-206-3536

HOPE MUTUAL AID GROUP FOR PATIENTS AND THEIR LOVED ONES: monthly, 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 12 PM – 1 PM, contact Melissa Seres at 203-575-5511

BETTER BREATHING CLUB: monthly, 3rd Friday, 2 PM – 3 PM, contact Marion Loyer at 203-757-4991

SPIRITUAL/PASTORAL CARE: Wednesdays, 10 AM – 2 PM, or by appointment, contact Judy Pavan at 203-575-5555

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY: LOOK GOOD, FEEL BETTER!: monthly, 1st Monday, either 2 PM – 4 PM or 4 PM – 6 PM, contact the ACS at 203-756-8888

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY: REACH TO RECOVERY: by appointment, contact the ACS at 203-756-8888

OSTOMY SUPPORT GROUP: monthly, 1st Monday, 7 PM – 9 PM, contact Shirley Harkins at 203-573-6203 or Bob Baker at 860-868-2311

Please call contact person to confirm that group is running as scheduled.
Meeting times may be rescheduled to accommodate holidays or special meetings.
See www.leevercancercenter.org for ongoing community events.