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Cancer Center

[Make an Appointment](#)

[Back](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[About Memorial Sloan Kettering](#)

[Refer a Patient](#)

ABOUT US

[Our mission, vision & core values](#)

[Leadership](#)

[History](#)

[Equality, diversity & inclusion](#)

[Annual report](#)

[Give to MSK](#)

discussions resulting in a distinctive clinical and research partnership built to rapidly move innovative, evidence-based cancer care into the community setting and enable bi-directional learning across the institutions.

“For more than a century, Memorial Sloan Kettering has delivered exceptional cancer care and generated the discoveries necessary to develop effective new treatments. Today, we recognize the need to do more,” said [Craig Thompson, MD](#), President and CEO of Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. “Through the MSK Cancer Alliance—and in collaboration with Hartford HealthCare as a pioneering member—we are looking to create a new model to address the fundamental challenge of providing high-quality cancer care in a wider population of patients.”

“It’s an honor to be selected as the first partner of the [MSK Cancer Alliance](#),” said Elliot Joseph, President and CEO of Hartford HealthCare. “Memorial Sloan Kettering chose Hartford HealthCare because of our dedication to delivering high-quality, consistent care across the state and because of the proven expertise of our physicians and medical teams. This will save lives by bringing evidence-based, world-class standards to our entire provider network. We are proud to be the model on which the MSK Cancer Alliance

will grow.”

The MSK Cancer Alliance is designed to enable an ongoing, “living, breathing” dynamic partnership between the comprehensive cancer center and community oncology providers, in order to bring the newest knowledge into the community setting.

“Currently, the vast majority of cancer care in the United States is delivered by community oncologists, but cancer advances can take years to be adopted in a community setting,” said José Baselga, MD, Physician-in-Chief of Memorial Sloan Kettering, who notes that ongoing, interactive real-time relationships are needed to effectively close this gap. “We want to rapidly accelerate the pace of integrating the latest advances of cancer care into a community setting. This unprecedented approach will demonstrate real value to both organizations and most importantly will improve the lives of cancer patients,” he added.

Among the many distinctive aspects of the collaboration is the establishment of the first MSK Alliance clinical trials site at Hartford Hospital, where many of the cancer clinical trials from MSK’s robust portfolio will be provided on-site. This will dramatically improve patient access to the latest cancer advances and breakthroughs.

“Through the MSK Cancer Alliance, MSK and HHC will together develop strategies to improve outcomes, and reduce the barriers to high-quality cancer care that many patients and families in Connecticut face today,” said Andrew Salner, Director of the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center. “This alliance gives us the chance to expedite the time it takes to get the most advanced treatment to our patients, eliminating barriers that often exist.”

Memorial Sloan Kettering physicians and leadership will now be collaboratively guiding HHC toward excellence in both its cancer care and clinical research programs. This will be achieved, for example, by collaborating on disease management teams, through on-site observations of new techniques, by sharing educational resources, by conducting quality and outcomes research, and by working together toward expanded access to MSK’s clinical trials. Through these ongoing efforts, HHC will be empowered to learn, adapt to and adopt Memorial Sloan Kettering standards of care within the context of its own institution and in the context of the communities it serves.

Over the next six months, teams from MSK and the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute will work collaboratively to assess the resources and capabilities of each of the system’s five acute care hospitals, identifying specific areas of focus. In addition, they will jointly recruit a physician-in-chief of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute who will be on the staff at both Hartford HealthCare and Memorial Sloan Kettering. The two organizations will work over the next few months to integrate Hartford physicians into MSK’s disease management teams.

The critical need for such an Alliance can be found in a report recently issued by the Institute of Medicine

(IOM) that described the challenge of delivering high-quality cancer care as a national “crisis” and noted advances in treatment may be unavailable to patients who lack access to sophisticated genetic tests or clinical trials. It noted that by 2030 new diagnoses are expected to reach 2.3 million a year as the population ages and that there may not be enough oncology specialists to care for these patients. In addition, doctors are having a hard time keeping up with complex new treatments, and too often decisions about cancer treatments aren’t based on good evidence.

“When it comes to cancer treatment, one size no longer fits all. We need outcomes-based solutions on an entirely new scale due to these extraordinary challenges,” said Dr. Thompson. “Our approach will substantively address issues raised in the IOM report,” added Dr. Thompson, who notes that we are building this Alliance—and beginning in Hartford—based on the belief that we all have something to learn from each other.”

MSK and HHC will work collaboratively to measure changes in outcomes including survival rates, quality of life, and total cost of care. HHC and future Alliance members will provide MSK with first-hand knowledge of how cancer advances are practiced in a community setting, where more than 80 percent of cancer patients in the United States receive cancer care.

While this approach to bringing truly state-of-the-art cancer care to local communities is focused on the rapid application of new knowledge, it does not require building new facilities, thus further providing a cost-effective model for delivering care.

After already spending more than a year to develop the structure and plan for the Alliance, both organizations are deeply committed to this initiative and believe this innovative model holds much promise to significantly improve cancer outcomes for patients.

“Good cancer care is not just treating cancer—it’s treating *your* cancer. Likewise, our partnership was designed to adapt and respond to the particular needs of Hartford HealthCare, its clinicians and its patients—and, together, MSK and HHC can evolve with the ever-changing practice of oncology,” said Dr. Thompson.

[Watch the press conference of the announcement.](#)

About Hartford HealthCare

Hartford HealthCare is the premiere health care network in Connecticut with more than 16,000 employees and more than \$2 billion in net revenue. The health system is dedicated to providing patients with an exceptional, coordinated care experience and a single, high standard of service. Hartford HealthCare includes Hartford Hospital; Backus Hospital; The Hospital of Central Connecticut; MidState Medical Center;

Windham Hospital and the Institute of Living psychiatric center which is part of a greater Behavioral Health Network including Rushford and Natchaug Hospital; VNA HealthCare; Clinical Laboratory Partners with locations statewide; Hartford HealthCare Medical Group; Connecticut Senior Health Services, which includes five assisted-living and skilled-nursing facilities; and the Hartford HealthCare Rehabilitation Network. A hallmark of the system's vision is to strengthen access to care close to home for patients by enhancing local health care delivery, bringing the latest technology and discoveries, clinical excellence and innovation to the patient and to the community.

Photos

[Back to top](#) ^

Video

VIDEO | 00:42

Memorial Hospital - Overview

[Video Details](#) →

[Back to top](#) ^

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