

# Friends in Deeds

## Connecticut Brain Tumor Alliance Marks 10 Years



Erin Mangan, a Hartford Hospital nurse navigator, greets a Path of Hope participant at the Connecticut Brain Tumor Alliance's 2016 walk.

When Sandy was diagnosed with a right frontal lobe meningioma in 2016, she faced significant changes in her behavior, problems with her balance, and short-term memory loss. She eventually lost her hair salon business and her son left college to become her full-time caregiver. With no income, Sandy's savings were depleted, and student loan, utility, food, and medical bills grew.

The Connecticut Brain Tumor Alliance is one of Hartford Hospital's most dynamic community partners in supporting patients like Sandy and their caregivers. Members of the brain tumor community at Hartford Hospital often struggle with financial hardship secondary to diagnosis and treatment. Grants from the Connecticut Brain Tumor Alliance specifically benefit patients who have been diagnosed with either malignant or benign brain tumors.

Founded by a group of survivors and caregivers who met through Hartford Hospital's brain tumor support group, CTBTA celebrated its 10th anniversary in fiscal year 2017. Over those 10 years, the CTBTA has donated \$208,000 to Hartford Hospital to support patients, foster awareness, and to purchase specialized medical equipment, says Executive Director Kimberly Roy-Canning.

"Hartford Hospital has been a partner with the CTBTA in improving the lives of brain tumor patients and their caregivers since our inception," Canning says. "Along the way, the hospital has continued to help us mark important milestones, including our first and each consecutive Path of Hope 5K, the largest brain tumor walk and run in Connecticut, now in its 5th year."

The walk, scheduled for September, is one event on CTBTA's full calendar of awareness programs and fund-raisers that help to sustain a regional

brain tumor support network. Statewide the CTBTA has dedicated over \$1.7 million to support brain tumor research, raising awareness, and patient and caregiver outreach programs. More than \$800,000 has directly benefited patients and their families, Canning says.

At Hartford Hospital, CTBTA's ongoing generosity has helped patients and care givers to pay for living expenses like groceries, rent, transportation to treatments, and transportation to support group meetings so patients and caregivers can focus on getting the care they need and not on the financial burdens they may have, Canning says.

"Our vision aligns with the hospital," Canning says. "We are working with the hospital to make Connecticut a center of excellence for brain tumor care."

Andrew Salner, MD, medical director of the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute at Hartford Hospital, knows firsthand the importance of CTBTA's mission. On the organization's 10th anniversary video, he reflects on how CTBTA inspires healthcare providers: "The notion that there is a statewide organization that is so focused on supporting patients, on making progress, on providing inspiration and hope for patients and families really means a lot to us as providers—it pushes us to continue to do the best that we can do—but also particularly to our patients, who really feel that they are not alone in the world."

For more information about the Connecticut Brain Tumor Alliance, visit [www.ctbta.org](http://www.ctbta.org).

Representatives from the Connecticut Brain Tumor Alliance (CTBTA) presented a check for \$20,000 to the Hartford HealthCare Cancer Institute in April 2018 to support patient assistance funds.

