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**CONTACT**

Heather Tindall (203) 573-6717

Matt Burgard (203) 573-6718

**WATERBURY HOSPITAL HIRES 30 NURSES THROUGH VISIONARY PROGRAM**

*Student Nurse Internship (SNI) Program Builds Foundation for the Future*

**WATERBURY** – Despite the ongoing economic downturn and a shortage of nurses in communities across the country, Waterbury Hospital has recently hired 30 new nurses this year through the Student Nurse Internship (SNI) Program, an innovative program that allows the hospital to continuously attract new nurses. Of the 30 new nurses hired this year, 24 went through the SNI program

The SNI program allows nursing students to work side-by-side with hospital RNs to get real, hands-on experience before they embark on their careers. Nursing students from across the Greater Waterbury Area are assigned to nurse “mentors” who provide the students with additional opportunities to learn and utilize the knowledge they have gained in their educational programs. Many of the interns go on to become graduate nurses and continue their careers at Waterbury Hospital. About 30 student nurses take part in the program every summer before they begin their senior year in nursing school. On average, anywhere from 60 to 80 percent of them are ultimately hired to be graduate nurses at Waterbury Hospital.

The program generally lasts for 11 weeks, with interns working anywhere from 24 to 32 hours per week. Although demand for nurses remains high in Connecticut, the recent downturn has made the job market more competitive, giving students in the SNI program a distinct advantage.

“I wouldn’t have a job if it weren’t for the internship program” said Cara Palmer, a graduate nurse at Waterbury Hospital who completed the SNI program.

Mary Prybylo, RN, the Chief Operating Officer at Waterbury Hospital, said the program provides the hospital with a foundation for the future. “It really positions us so that we can maintain a high-quality nursing staff for years to come, especially as we know that we will continue to be faced with a nursing shortage,” Prybylo said.

*Waterbury Hospital is the largest private employer in the Greater Waterbury region, and serves a vital role in the economic vitality of Western Connecticut. It is a private, non-profit acute care teaching hospital licensed for 367 beds and affiliated with the Yale School of Medicine, the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. Founded in 1890 as Waterbury’s first and Connecticut’s fourth hospital, Waterbury Hospital is a full-service community health-care institution with centers of excellence in primary care, cardiac services, behavioral health and orthopaedics.*

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