



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHA to Recognize Norwalk Hospital's Kelly DePanfilis, RN, as a Healthcare Hero

WALLINGFORD – At its 98th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2016, the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) will recognize Kelly DePanfilis, RN, in the Medicine/Oncology Department at Norwalk Hospital, Western Connecticut Health Network, as a 2016 Healthcare Hero. She was nominated for this award by Jan Mola, RN.

Although excellence is the norm for Ms. DePanfilis, an oncology nurse, it was a promise that she made to a patient that resulted in a lifesaving effort to save a child. Ms. DePanfilis was taking care of a patient with leukemia who, despite his illness, had a very positive outlook and explained to her that when he was well enough he planned to have a bone marrow transplant. When Ms. DePanfilis expressed her interest in becoming a donor herself, the patient showed her how to get on the registry.

Several months after the patient was discharged from Norwalk Hospital, Ms. DePanfilis participated in the "Be the Match" registry outreach at the annual Norwalk Hospital Whittingham Cancer Center Walk. A few months later, DePanfilis received a call that she might be a match for someone. Without any hesitation, she went to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston for more testing. She learned that she was a 100 percent match for a six-month old boy with an immunodeficiency disorder.

Ms. DePanfilis credited her patient for encouraging her to join the Bone Marrow Registry and "pay it forward." When she learned that he had passed away, she reached out to his family and explained to them how his inspiration had motivated her to become a donor and change a little boy's life.

Ms. DePanfilis has since organized the bone marrow drive at Norwalk Hospital, coordinating all aspects of the event. But she didn't stop there. Ms. DePanfilis also organized a winter coat drive at the hospital for the less fortunate in the community, led the effort on her nursing unit to send packages to members of the military overseas, volunteered for the annual Tommy Spinola Golf Tournament to raise money for the community, and served as the chairperson of the Hospital's Practice Council.

Every day, Ms. DePanfilis demonstrates that nursing is not just a profession, but a calling and a way of life.

CHA's Healthcare Heroes award was developed in 2002 to celebrate the invaluable contributions of healthcare workers, both to their field and to the community at large. Now in its 15th year, the presentation of the Healthcare Heroes awards has become a highlight of CHA's Annual Meeting.

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The Connecticut Hospital Association has been dedicated to serving Connecticut's hospitals since 1919. Through state and federal advocacy, CHA represents the interests of Connecticut's hospitals on key healthcare issues in the areas of quality and patient safety, access and coverage, workforce, public health, and hospital reimbursement.

