



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHA to Recognize The William W. Backus Hospital's Elizabeth Lanham, RN,
as a Healthcare Hero**

WALLINGFORD – At its 99th Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 14, 2017, the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) will recognize Elizabeth Lanham, APRN, Emergency Department Nurse Practitioner, The William W. Backus Hospital, as a 2017 Healthcare Hero. She was nominated for this award by Steve Coates.

Ms. Lanham's career as a nurse was humming along just fine. She had a house, a dog, and a great job as an advanced practice nurse in a busy community hospital ED. But she still longed for something more. Ms. Lanham wanted to give back—or “pay it forward”—for all of the blessings in her life.

After reading a fellow nurse's blog about her experience on a medical mission with orphans in Central America with the group Our Little Brothers and Sisters, Ms. Lanham said her next move became clear. She took a year off from her job to work with the international aid group that helps orphaned and abandoned children in Latin America and Haiti by providing food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and education.

During her year-long medical mission in Guatemala with Our Little Brothers and Sisters, Ms. Lanham lived and worked in a facility that housed 300 orphans ranging in age from newborns to teenagers. Her primary job was in the home health clinic, where she coordinated wellness visits, vaccinations, and the need for follow-up care for those with pre-existing conditions.

While she felt like she was truly making a difference at the clinic, Ms. Lanham says her most rewarding experience was the work she did after her shift ended. Each night, Ms. Lanham would feed and put to bed the home's special needs children. One child's experience, she said, will stick with her forever. “He's a quadriplegic who was shot while running away from his house. Many of these children have seen their entire families killed, have been abused physically, emotionally, sexually. Yet, there's this unconditional love they have for [their caregivers] that I've never seen before,” she said.

Prior to going to Guatemala, Ms. Lanham had done several shorter medical missions to impoverished Third World countries, including a stay in Haiti following the devastating earthquake in 2010. It was her year in Guatemala that was truly life changing, however.

"It has really made me count my blessings," she said.

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 16th 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.

