

SAINT FRANCIS RECOGNIZED WITH GOLD-PLUS AWARD FOR HEART FAILURE CARE

Only facility in state to also earn Target Heart Failure Honor Roll Award

(Hartford, Conn. – June 3, 2015) — Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center has received the *Get With The Guidelines®–Heart Failure Gold-Plus Quality Achievement Award* for implementing specific quality improvement measures outlined by the American Heart Association/American College of Cardiology Foundation’s secondary prevention guidelines for patients with heart failure.

This marks the sixth year that Saint Francis has been recognized with a *Get With The Guidelines* quality achievement award.

Saint Francis also received the association’s *Target: Heart Failure Honor Roll*. This initiative provides hospitals with educational tools, prevention programs and treatment guidelines designed to reduce the risk of heart failure patients ending up back in the hospital. Hospitals are required to meet criteria that improves medication adherence, provides early follow-up care and coordination, and enhances patient education. The goal is to reduce hospital readmissions and help patients improve their quality of life in managing this chronic condition.

Saint Francis is the only hospital in the state to earn the *Target: Heart Failure Honor Roll* distinction.

Get With The Guidelines–Heart Failure is a quality improvement program that helps hospital teams provide the most up-to-date, research-based guidelines with the goal of speeding recovery and reducing hospital readmissions for heart failure patients. Launched in 2005, numerous published studies have demonstrated the program’s success in achieving patient outcome improvements, including reductions in 30-day readmissions.

Saint Francis earned the award by meeting specific quality achievement measures for the diagnosis and treatment of heart failure patients at a set level for a designated period. These measures include evaluation of the patient, proper use of medications and aggressive risk-reduction therapies. ACE inhibitors/ARBs, beta-blockers, diuretics, anticoagulants, and other appropriate therapies are included. Before patients are discharged, they also receive education on managing their heart failure and overall health, schedule a follow-up appointment, and other care transition interventions.

“Saint Francis is dedicated to improving the quality of care for our heart failure patients. Implementing the American Heart Association’s *Get With The Guidelines–Heart Failure* program helps us to accomplish this goal by tracking and measuring our success in meeting internationally-respected guidelines,” said Daniel Diver, M.D., Chief of Cardiology, Saint Francis *Care*. “This recognition confirms that we are on the right track, and we’re very proud of our team for achieving this honor for the fourth year in a row.”

“Following these guidelines is a crucial step in prolonging the lives of heart failure patients. We are fully committed to maintaining this very high level of performance,” said Richard Soucier, M.D., Director, Congestive Heart Failure Unit at Saint Francis.

“We are pleased to recognize Saint Francis for its commitment to heart failure

care,” said Deepak L. Bhatt, M.D., M.P.H., national chairman of the Get With The Guidelines steering committee and Executive Director of Interventional Cardiovascular Programs at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. “Studies have shown that hospitals that consistently follow *Get With The Guidelines* quality improvement measures can reduce patients’ length of stays and 30-day readmission rates, and also reduce disparity gaps in care.”

According to the American Heart Association, about 5.7 million adults in the United States suffer from heart failure, with the number expected to rise to eight million by 2030. Statistics show that each year about 870,000 new cases are diagnosed and about 50 percent of those diagnosed will die within five years. However, many heart failure patients can lead a full, enjoyable life when their condition is managed with proper medications or devices and with healthy lifestyle changes.

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About Saint Francis Care

Saint Francis *Care* is an integrated healthcare delivery system established by Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897. Licensed for 617 beds and 65 bassinets, it is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other major entities of Saint Francis *Care* include The Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center, the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research, and Saint Francis Health*Care* Partners. Johnson Memorial Medical Center, parent organization of Johnson Memorial Hospital, Evergreen Health Care Center, and Home and Community Health Services is also a Saint Francis *Care* Partner. Saint Francis *Care*’s services are supported by a network of five major Access Centers and eight additional medical office centers sited throughout the region. For more information, visit www.stfranciscare.com.

About Get With The Guidelines

Get With The Guidelines® is the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association’s hospital-based quality improvement program that provides hospitals with the latest research-based guidelines. Developed with the goal of saving lives and hastening recovery, Get With The Guidelines has touched the lives of more than 5 million patients since 2001. For more information, visit heart.org/quality or heart.org/QualityMap.