



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HEART CENTER OF GREATER WATERBURY GRANTED PERMANENT STATUS**

*WATERBURY* -- The Heart Center of Greater Waterbury today announced that it has been granted permanent operating status by the Connecticut Office of Health Care Access (OHCA). The announcement came following receipt of a "notice of final decision" received by Saint Mary's Hospital, Waterbury Hospital and the University of Connecticut late Wednesday.

"Being granted permanent status is great news for our community!" said Loraine Shea, executive director of the Heart Center. "We appreciate the time and effort Commissioner Cristine Vogel and the OHCA staff put in to this process. It is clear through this decision that OHCA understands the importance of these services in our community. It has been a long process for everyone involved, and we are grateful to have reached such a positive outcome."

In the summer of 2008 when the Center's three-year "demonstration status" ended, the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury received a six-month extension from OHCA allowing the Center to operate through January 19, 2009. During that extension period, representatives of the Heart Center filed a Certificate of Need (CON) with the State of Connecticut seeking permanent status for the program. The Heart Center had been in jeopardy of being closed prior to the extension.

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Shea said that the Heart Center had successfully met or exceeded all of the appropriate national quality standards and that physicians, elected officials, and the Greater Waterbury community were all united in their belief that the program should be continued on a permanent basis. “We received overwhelming support for the continuation of this program,” said Shea, “and to the thousands and thousands of people who were so vocal in their support of the Heart Center, we offer our sincerest heartfelt thanks.”

The Heart Center of Greater Waterbury is an advanced cardiac care program at both Saint Mary's Hospital and Waterbury Hospital offering Greater Waterbury residents immediate access to a complete range of cardiac services, including angioplasty and open-heart surgery. Since opening in 2005, the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury has performed 2,238 angioplasties and 735 open heart procedures.

The program has been built upon a strong foundation of heart services, including the catheterization labs available at both hospitals, and the complementary services provided by both emergency departments and intensive care units. By continuing to perform advanced cardiac procedures, patients receive a full spectrum of cardiac services without having to leave Waterbury. With permanent status granted for the program, Heart Center patients in need of cardiac treatment will continue to be cared for at either community hospital.

For more information about the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury, please visit [www.heartcentergw.org](http://www.heartcentergw.org).

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