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**OHCA COMMISSIONER GRANTS SIX-MONTH OPERATING EXTENSION TO HEART
CENTER OF GREATER WATERBURY**

Waterbury, Conn., August 29, 2008 — The Connecticut Office of Health Care Access (OHCA) has granted the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury a six-month extension period to continue operating through January 19, 2009. The Heart Center, which provides quality lifesaving cardiovascular care to people in the Greater-Waterbury region, had been in jeopardy of being closed. The decision does not grant the program a permanent status beyond the extension.

"We are thrilled with this decision and the opportunity to continue offering quality cardiovascular care to the people of Greater Waterbury," said Loraine Shea, executive director of the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury. "This program means so much to this community. I want to thank all the volunteers and supporters of the Heart Center who rallied around this cause both at our public rally and at the public hearing. This was a total community effort."

In 2005 the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury was granted a three-year program under what is called a 'demonstration project.' During the initial three years of providing services, the Heart Center had to meet certain criteria as outlined by the OHCA to assure patient safety and quality of care.

"The Heart Center has been providing top quality cardiovascular care since its inception three years ago," said Waterbury Hospital President John Tobin. "We are extremely pleased with Commissioner Vogel's decision to grant a six-month extension for the program, allowing us to continue to provide these life-saving services to our community."

The Center has successfully treated more than 2,400 hearts and met or exceeded all of the criteria outlined by OHCA for the program except for the volume targets for open heart surgery. Tobin said the volume targets were based on research from 1975, but more recent and relevant research indicates that the Heart Center's open heart procedure volume is sufficient not only to have a quality program, but an efficient one as well.

"This six-month extension will truly save lives by allowing us to keep our doors open during the next phase of this process," said William Casey, Interim CEO of Saint Mary's Hospital. "We look forward to the opportunity to present our case for obtaining permanent status for the Heart Center, which is our ultimate goal."

The Heart Center of Greater Waterbury will continue to operate for the next six months while they complete a formal Certificate of Need (CON) for continuation of the program. For more information and to show your support for the Heart Center of Greater Waterbury, please visit www.heartcentergw.org.

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