



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CHA to Recognize Lawrence + Memorial Hospital with 2016 Community Service Award**

WALLINGFORD – At its 98th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2016, the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health will recognize Lawrence + Memorial Hospital (L+M) with the 2016 Connecticut’s Hospital Community Service Award.

The hospital is being recognized for a seven-bed respite program at the Homeless Hospitality Center (HHC), which serves homeless patients with post-acute care follow-up. HHC is the principal, private, not-for-profit community-based agency serving the region’s homeless population. Three years ago, representatives from the HHC, L+M Hospital, and L+M’s home health agency, the VNA of Southeastern Connecticut, collaborated to address a conundrum: a significant percentage of homeless patients who were treated and released from the ED with discharge plans for issues that ordinarily could be managed by self-care at home – or with skilled home healthcare – kept returning to the ED with follow-up needs arising from the lack of a clean, safe, reliable setting for recuperation. Thus was born an important addition to the Center’s already broad scope of services: a seven-bed respite care unit.

The unit, which has served 100 people in the last 12 months, has resulted in a more effective partnership among L+M’s social workers, the HHC staff, and the L+M ED. This improves health outcomes, allows for quicker releases from the ED, and reduces avoidable readmissions. Respite interventions also help prevent manageable illnesses from worsening.

“L+M’s collaboration with the Homeless Hospitality Center and the VNA of Southeastern Connecticut to establish respite care for the homeless has led to the alleviation of suffering for many who need ongoing, constant care after they are discharged,” said Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. “L+M’s commitment to population health management is evident through the establishment and support of the respite program, which provides a mechanism to coordinate care and link vulnerable people to critical resources. We are proud to honor L+M with this award.”

The respite unit also better supports individuals with complex medical needs, and allows for better care of patients with a psychiatric diagnosis after they are discharged from L+M’s behavioral health unit,

Pond House. And, because few respite guests have only one issue, the unit is also a resource for helping people navigate myriad post-hospital healthcare and housing challenges. With efforts from HHC staff, the VNA, an L+M social worker, and L+M's financial support, needed services are put in place more effectively.

This work is improving health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs. Having respite also helps L+M staff manage care more efficiently, avoid unnecessary hospitalizations, and allow staff to know that care they provide will be followed up appropriately after discharge.

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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.

