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**ECHN President & CEO Peter Karl
Receives National *Grassroots Champion Award***

Wallingford, CT – The American Hospital Association (AHA), in partnership with the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA), today honored Peter Karl, President & CEO of the Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN) with the American Hospital Association *Grassroots Champion Award*. As a 2010 Grassroots Champion, Mr. Karl was recognized for his exceptional leadership in generating grassroots and community support for issues of importance to hospitals and healthcare.

Mr. Karl is an active and effective advocate for hospitals in Connecticut, at the forefront of hospital-related issues both in Hartford and Washington, D.C. He has been instrumental in leading a campaign by hospitals in Connecticut to promote legislation that will provide relief for employer-sponsored pension plans. Large funding requirements for these plans have resulted in significant financial obligations for many organizations, including hospitals. Without Congressional action on this issue, many people will lose their jobs and the economic recovery will be slowed significantly.

The American Hospital Association's *Grassroots Champion Award* was created to recognize those hospital leaders who most effectively educate elected officials on how major issues affect the hospital's vital role in the community.

“Peter Karl is an extremely effective advocate on issues of critical importance to Connecticut's hospitals,” stated Jennifer Jackson, CEO of the Connecticut Hospital Association. “His leadership on pension issues has been of particular importance given the current economic climate facing hospitals. Peter is an excellent choice for this prestigious award.”

The *Grassroots Champion Award* is presented annually to one individual from each state. The 2010 honorees were recognized at a special Breakfast of *Grassroots Champions* at the AHA Annual Membership Meeting in Washington, D.C.

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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 not-for-profit hospitals on key healthcare issues in the areas of quality and patient safety, access and coverage, workforce, public health, and hospital reimbursement.