



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHA to Recognize Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center's Anita Kelsey, MD,
as a Healthcare Hero**

WALLINGFORD – At its 98th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2016, the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) will recognize Anita M. Kelsey, MD, Director of Echocardiography and the Women's Heart Program at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, as a 2016 Healthcare Hero. She was nominated for this award by Kristen Durocher.

When Dr. Kelsey first arrived at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center in 2003, her goal was to develop a women's heart care initiative to fight cardiovascular disease, which kills more than 500,000 women each year in the U.S. So she took action and, in 2006, created the Women's Heart Program at Saint Francis; she now serves as the program's director.

The Program, offered free to any woman over 18, is designed to raise awareness and help women take a proactive approach to heart disease through education. Participants register for a risk assessment and a two-hour education session provided by a cardiologist, registered nurse, registered dietitian, and an exercise physiologist. The staff of the Women's Heart Program assists in developing individualized goals for participants through a combination of dietary changes and structured exercise plans.

Dr. Kelsey and her team are also taking their message beyond the hospital's walls. Under her leadership, the team educates women in schools, churches, corporations, and at many other community events and gatherings. Since developing the program 11 years ago, the lives of more than 10,000 women in the greater Hartford area have been directly impacted through education, outreach, and screening programs. In addition to reaching out to the general public, Dr. Kelsey also understands the importance of education for the clinicians involved in the treatment of women's heart disease. That is why she created an annual symposium, Women's Cardiac Issues Now, which will celebrate its 11th year this June.

"Anita's advocacy for women's heart health is unmatched. There is really no one else like her," said Bernie Clark, MD, Cardiologist at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center. "Her daily dedication and commitment to the issue is twofold. First, it's illustrated through the compassionate care she shows her patients and, second, in the considerable effort she makes in educating other physicians in the community about this important issue, making sure symptoms of this deadly disease are not easily dismissed."

CHA's Healthcare Heroes award was developed in 2002 to celebrate the invaluable contributions of healthcare workers, both to their field and to the community at large. Now in its 15th year, the presentation of the Healthcare Heroes awards has become a highlight of CHA's Annual Meeting.

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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.

