



**For Immediate Release**

July 30, 2012

Contact: Michele Sharp  
Director of Communications and Public Affairs  
Connecticut Hospital Association  
(203) 294-7213  
[Sharp@chime.org](mailto:Sharp@chime.org)

## **New England Health Equity Council Celebrates First Anniversary**

WALLINGFORD – The New England Regional Health Equity Council (RHEC), co-chaired by Marie Spivey, EdD, RN, MPA, Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) Vice President, Health Equity, celebrated its first anniversary at its annual meeting on July 26, 2012, at the Northeastern University Alumni Center in Boston, Massachusetts. The RHEC was formed during the summer of 2011 when Council members drawn from all six New England states convened to explore a regional approach to addressing health disparities and the social factors including education, employment, housing, and the environment that influence health outcomes. The New England RHEC is the regional arm of the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities (NPA), the first national multi-sector community and partnership-driven effort on behalf of health equity.

With input from communities, organizations, and practitioners, the NPA created the [National Stakeholder Strategy for Achieving Health Equity](#). This strategic action plan includes the formation of 10 Regional Health Equity Councils across the U.S., with members who serve as leaders and catalysts to improve health equity.

“Our Council has been fortunate to begin its work building on a shared New England culture and close geographic proximity. We aim to advance health equity for various cultural, ethnic, and other groups in our region,” said Ralph Fuccillo, Co-Chair of the RHECouncil.

“The NPA and the New England RHEC are inspiring and cultivating a number of discussions and collaborative activities to enhance health equity improvement solutions at the regional, statewide, and community levels,” said Dr. Spivey. During its first year, the Council established structural supports to foster regional collaboration including leadership, governance, and working committees. The first year also afforded Council members opportunities to collaborate and explore strategies for improving workforce diversity in health organizations and ways to talk about health reform in terms that are relevant and understandable to the public.

In addition to leaders from traditional healthcare-focused organizations, council members come from diverse backgrounds including education, technology, environmental justice, economic development, and business.

Building on the foundation laid over the last 12 months, at the annual meeting on July 26, the Council established priorities for a focused national initiative to: increase awareness of the significance of health disparities; strengthen and broaden leadership for addressing health disparities at all levels; improve



health and healthcare outcomes for racial, ethnic, and underserved populations; improve cultural and linguistic competency and the diversity of the health-related workforce; and improve data availability and coordination, utilization, and diffusion of research and evaluation outcomes.

###

To learn more about the NPA and the regional councils visit <http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa>.

#### **About CHA**

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, community health, diversity, and hospital reimbursement.