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Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center Launches *Buckle Up for Life* To Help Keep Child Passengers Safe

National Education Program from Toyota and Cincinnati Children's Shows Measurable Results

(HARTFORD, Conn. – Sept. 16, 2016) – What if there was a way to prevent a leading cause of childhood death, but three out of four of us were doing it wrong? The startling truth is that 75 percent of infant and child car seats in the U.S. are not used correctly.^[1]

Today, [Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center](#) announced the launch of [Buckle Up for Life](#), the national car seat education program from [Toyota](#) and [Cincinnati Children's](#). With a \$32,000 grant from Toyota, trained specialists at Saint Francis will work closely with families and caregivers in the greater Hartford area to educate them about all aspects of car seats, booster seats and seat belts. Families in need will receive free car seats and will be matched with certified child passenger safety technicians to learn how to install them properly.

“Our goal is to improve the health and overall well-being of the people in our community by **providing** prevention and research initiatives that reduce the occurrence and consequence of violence and injury,” said Marisol Feliciano, violence and injury prevention program coordinator at Saint Francis. “By partnering with Buckle Up for Life we will be able to expand the number of car seat safety clinics in more communities.”

The Kids In Safety Seats – CT, Child Passenger Safety Program, an initiative of the Saint Francis Violence and Injury Prevention Program, Department of Trauma, hosts approximately 20 car seat clinics annually. Based on our findings at these checkup event inspections there is a gross misuse rate of improper child safety seat installation, selection and harness use, of over

85% in the City of Hartford.

“An alarming three out of four car seats are not installed properly. We can and must do better for our children,” said Gloria Del Castillo, child passenger safety expert at Cincinnati Children’s and specialist of community engagement for *Buckle Up for Life*. “We know that proper use of car seats and booster seats can help prevent many child injuries and deaths. That’s why we are so excited to partner Saint Francis to teach parents, caregivers and children in the greater Hartford area about the proper use of car seats and provide free seats to families in need.”

Buckle Up for Life was created by Toyota and Cincinnati Children’s in 2004. In one city alone, the program nearly tripled the use of proper car seats among participating families. Community organizations that have offered the program say they have observed a marked improvement in participants’ auto safety behaviors, including:

- The average rate of children unrestrained in cars decreased from one in four to fewer than one in 20;
- The average rate of children in car seats increased from roughly one in four to one in two; and
- The use of seat belts by adults increased by an average of 13 percent, from 68 percent to 81 percent.

Saint Francis is announcing the launch of *Buckle Up for Life* in conjunction with its on-going free car seat check event, which will be held on the following dates:

Tolland Fire Department 7 Rhodes Road, Tolland	Sunday	September 18, 2016	10:00am – Noon No appointment necessary
Eastern CT State University Police Department	Friday	September 23, 2016	2:00pm – 4:00pm By appointment (1-860-714-5477)
Hartford Fire Department 510 Franklin Avenue, Hartford	Saturday	September 24, 2016	10:00am – 12:00pm By appointment (1-860-714-5477)
Stop and Shop Supermarket	Tuesday	October 4, 2016	4:30pm – 6:30pm

55 Oak Street, Glastonbury			No appointment nec
Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center 260 Ashley Street, Hartford Employee C Lot	Sunday	October 23, 2016	1:00pm – 3:00pm By appointment (1-860-714-5477)
South Glastonbury Fire Department Co#2 905 Main Street, South Glastonbury	Thursday	October 27, 2016	4:00pm – 6:30pm By appointment (1-860-714-5477)
Hartford Fire Department 510 Franklin Avenue, Hartford	Wednesday	November 16, 2016	3:30pm – 5:30pm By appointment (1-860-714-5477)
South Glastonbury Fire Department Co#2 905 Main Street, South Glastonbury	Monday	December 19, 2016	3:30pm – 6:00pm By appointment (1-860-714-5477)

About Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center has been an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897 and is now a member of Trinity Health – New England. Licensed for 617 beds and 65 bassinets, it is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other Trinity Health – New England entities include Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, Smilow Cancer Hospital Yale-New Haven at Saint Francis, the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research, Saint Francis HealthCare Partners and Sisters of Providence Health System, Springfield, Mass, along with Johnson Memorial Hospital, and Home and Community Health Services. For more information, visit www.stfranciscare.com.

About Buckle Up for Life

Buckle Up for Life is a national injury prevention program for families, created by Toyota and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in 2004, to help keep child passengers safe. The program partners with leading children's hospitals, community organizations, local governments, schools and non-profit organizations to teach parents and children about the proper use of car seats and seat belts and to provide free car seats to families in need. *Buckle Up for Life* has reached more than 45,000 people nationwide and has partnerships in 17 cities including New York, Dallas, Memphis, Phoenix, Chicago, Cincinnati, Houston, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Orange County, and San Antonio – and expands to new partners each year. In one city alone, the program nearly tripled the use of proper car seats in participating families. Toyota has provided funding for over 40,000 car seats for families in need. For more information about Buckle Up for Life, please visit www.buckleupforlife.org.