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**Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center Receives \$84,000 Grant for COPD Program
from the Gawlicki Family Foundation**

(HARTFORD, Conn. – July 13, 2017) Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center has received a \$84,000 grant from the Gawlicki Family Foundation to implement a home-based pulmonary rehabilitation program for at-risk patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

“We are very grateful to the Gawlicki family for this incredible gift to support this program that will help our patients on their journey to wellness,” said Saint Francis Foundation Chief Development Officer Lynn Rossini.

With the grant, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and program director Richard L. ZuWallack, M.D., will implement a program for pulmonary rehabilitation in the home for discharged COPD patients. The home-based rehabilitation intervention will be a mechanism for enhancing patient – caregiver communication, providing necessary education, teaching self-management strategies, and promoting exercise and physical activity. In addition, an important goal will be to get the patient to transition from home-based to center-based pulmonary rehabilitation for continued care.

“This grant will allow us to improve the health of our at-risk patients,” said Daniel A. Gerardi, M.D., F.C.C.P., section chief pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine. “Our goal is to help them on the path toward better health from the comfort and ease of their own homes. This home-program is just one component of a modified, comprehensive COPD management program focusing on the integrated care of our patients.”

Traditional, outpatient center-based pulmonary rehabilitation – like the one at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center - results in substantial improvements for patients across multiple outcome areas including improvements in breathlessness, exercise capacity, functional status, self-efficacy, quality of life, and health care utilization.

Despite these documented, positive outcomes, it is often difficult to get discharged COPD patients to attend regular outpatient-based rehab sessions.

The Outpatient Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center is designed to achieve a maximum level of functional independence. The program combines education, exercise and individual therapy. The Pulmonary Rehabilitation Team includes a medical specialist in pulmonary diseases, pulmonary nurse, respiratory therapist, physical therapist, nutritionist, pharmacist, and, most importantly, the patient and his or her family. An exercise physiologist provides input on exercise prescriptions.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema, is a chronic lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. The disease is increasingly common, affecting millions of Americans, and is the third leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the American Lung Association. The good news is COPD is often preventable and treatable.

The main cause of COPD is smoking, but nonsmokers can get COPD too.

Many people don't recognize the symptoms of COPD until later stages of the disease. Sometimes people think they are short of breath or less able to go about their normal activities because they are "just getting older." But shortness of breath is never normal. If you experience any of these symptoms, or think you might be at risk for COPD, it is important to discuss this with your doctor.

- Chronic cough
- Shortness of breath while doing everyday activities (dyspnea)
- Frequent respiratory infections
- Blueness of the lips or fingernail beds (cyanosis)
- Fatigue
- Producing a lot of mucus (also called phlegm or sputum)
- Wheezing

About Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center

Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center has been an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897. In 2015, Saint Francis became part of Trinity Health - New England, an integrated health care delivery system that is a member of Trinity Health, Livonia, MI, one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation. Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center is licensed for 617 beds, is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other Saint Francis entities include the Comprehensive Women's Health Center, the Connecticut Joint Replacement

Institute, the Curtis D. Robinson Center for Health Equity, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Smilow Cancer Hospital Yale-New Haven at Saint Francis, and Saint Francis Medical Group. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @SaintFrancisCT