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AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation Awards
$165,770 Grant to Mercy Hospital to
Improve Heart Health in High-risk Buffalo Community
Grant will fund wellness program at Mercy Comprehensive Care Center

Buffalo, N.Y. – Mercy Hospital Foundation has received a grant for $165,770 from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation to combat heart disease in one of Buffalo's poorest neighborhoods. The Mercy Hospital Foundation is one of only ten nonprofit organizations across the country to receive this funding as part of AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation*'s Connections for Cardiovascular Health[SM]* program.

Aimed at improving cardiovascular health in local communities, the first-time grant will fund Mercy Hospital's *Heart Smart for Life* program, which is focused on improving the underlying causes of heart disease for high-risk patients served by the hospital's Mercy Comprehensive Care Center (MCCC) and residents of the surrounding community. Located on Louisiana Street in the city's "Old First Ward," the MCCC serves more than 12,000 patients and provides over 39,000 visits annually in this culturally diverse, economically depressed community.

"Catholic Health's mission to serve those in need is what sets the Mercy Comprehensive Care Center apart from other primary care practices," said Kathy Swenson, Executive Director of the Mercy Hospital Foundation. "The center's community healthcare approach, with doctors, nurses, social workers, pharmacists and dieticians, working hand in hand with religious leaders and other area partners, helps improve access to care and address the issues that contribute to health disparities in the surrounding neighborhood."

The *Heart Smart for Life* program is a collaborative, donor-funded initiative to ensure vulnerable populations – those who otherwise might fall through the cracks – have access to nutrition education, biometric health screenings, wellness programs, and other resources focused on preventing heart disease.

Statistics continue to show a need for community education and prevention efforts surrounding cardio-vascular disease in Western New York. According to a recent Community Health Needs Assessment, heart disease is the leading cause of death in Erie County, with area residents experiencing 33% more cardiovascular related deaths than the average U.S. citizen.

"Cardiovascular disease afflicts too many of our families, friends and neighbors," said James W. Blasetto, MD, MPH, FACC, chairman of the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation. "We are proud to support Mercy Hospital of Buffalo's innovative program to help prevent and reduce heart disease in their community."

MCCC's Heart Smart for Life Program Coordinator Jeanne O'Hara will participate in a national roundtable discussion held at the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation's main headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware on Thursday, February 16. The program will be live-streamed so representatives can highlight the positive results of their programs and share lessons learned on how to improve cardiovascular disease at the grassroots level. Watch the livestream event from 11 am to 12:30 pm on February 16 at https://engage.vevent.com/index.jsp?eid=3740&seid=684.

For more information, follow @ConnectCVHealth on Twitter and @AstraZenecaHealthCareFoundation on Facebook.

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About AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation
Established in 1993, the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation is a Delaware not-for-profit corporation and a 501(c)(3) entity organized for charitable purposes, including to promote public awareness of healthcare issues, to promote public education of medical knowledge, and to support or contribute to charitable and qualified exempt organizations consistent with its charitable purpose. Connections for Cardiovascular Health^{SM} was launched in 2010 through a charitable contribution of $25 million from AstraZeneca.

About Mercy Hospital of Buffalo
Mercy Hospital is home to the Catholic Health Heart Center, providing a full range of cardiac care services including heart surgery and the latest minimally invasive cardiac procedures, and serves as a Joint Commission-accredited Comprehensive Stroke Center with physician experts and capabilities to diagnose and treat the most complex stroke cases. Mercy was named one of America's Top 50 Hospitals for Cardiac Surgery in 2015 and America's Top 100 Hospitals for Orthopedic Surgery in 2016 by HealthGrades®. The hospital is also home to the state-of-the-art Mercy Emergency Center featuring 32 private treatment rooms and a rooftop heliport, as well as the Family BirthPlace providing a full spectrum of maternity/child services, a neonatal intensive care unit and a specialized pediatric care unit. Mercy also offers a wide array of outpatient, primary care and rehabilitation services at convenient locations throughout the area, including 24/7 emergency care available at the Mercy Ambulatory Care Center in Orchard Park. Founded over 100 years ago by the Sisters of Mercy, the hospital is committed to medical excellence with an ongoing mission to reveal the healing love of Jesus to those in need. For more information, visit www.chsbuffalo.org.

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