



Public Relations Department
565 Abbott Road • Buffalo, NY 14220
(716) 828-3747 • FAX: (716) 828-3499

NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Melanie Griffis, Manager
Public Relations, Mercy Hospital of Buffalo

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 7, 2017

AstraZeneca Healthcare Foundation Awards \$100,000 Grant Towards the *Heart Smart for Life* Community Wellness Program

Buffalo, N.Y. – The AstraZeneca Healthcare Foundation, *Connections for Cardiovascular Health*SM (CCH) has awarded another \$100,000 grant to the Mercy Hospital Foundation to continue second-year funding for the *Heart Smart for Life* free community wellness program based at the Mercy Comprehensive Care Center (MCCC) in Buffalo, NY.

Mercy Hospital Foundation Executive Director Kathy Swenson and Heart Smart for Life Program Director Jeanne O'Hara are currently participating in the National CCH Learning Forum for grant awardees that is being held December 5 – 7 at the Foundation's headquarters in Wilmington, Delaware. During the Forum, they along with 23 other grant awardees from nonprofit organizations across the nation are sharing ideas and valuable information about their programs designed to prevent and combat heart disease in their communities.

"The Center's community healthcare approach, with doctors, nurses, social workers, pharmacists and dieticians, working hand in hand with other area partners, helps improve access to care and address the issues that contribute to health disparities in the surrounding neighborhood," said Swenson.

In early 2017, the Mercy Hospital Foundation announced a grant for \$165,770 from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation to kick off the *Heart Smart for Life* program, offering participants free biometric health screenings, one-on-one nutritional counseling, wellness education and exercise classes, and other resources focused on improving cardiovascular health. In the first five months of the program, 130 Heart Smart for Life participants together lost over 350 pounds and improved their blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and BMI readings along the way.

"The AstraZeneca Healthcare Foundation's CCH program has allowed us to develop and design the program we've always wanted to be able to offer the patients at our clinic and in our community," said Jeanne O'Hara. "The program has allowed us to combat heart disease in one of Buffalo's poorest neighborhoods."

The Heart Smart for Life program is open to the public and people do not need to be a patient of Catholic Health or the Mercy Comprehensive Care Center to join. For more information, please call 716-923-6152.

Located at 397 Louisiana Street in Buffalo's Old First Ward district, the MCCC offers primary care services including adult medicine, pediatrics, OB/GYN and podiatry services with on-site diagnostic x-ray and laboratory services.

###