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Alpha Phi Foundation Announces 2014 Heart to Heart Grant Recipient

Award Doubles to \$100,000 to Increase Advancements in Women's Heart Health

Evanston, IL – February 28, 2014 – Introduced in 1993 by Alpha Phi Foundation, the Heart to Heart Grant funds research and educational programs that support the improvement of women's heart health. Previously, grants of \$50,000 have been awarded to medical professionals to better understand heart disease in women – specifically its symptoms, treatment and prevention.

Selected from 32 applicants, **Memorial Hermann Foundation** will receive the first \$100,000 grant to be awarded to a single organization. This increase reflects the Foundation's commitment to lessening the incident and impact of women's heart disease.

This grant will allow the Center for Advanced Heart Failure at Memorial Hermann Heart & Vascular Institute – Texas Medical Center to **establish the first national registry for cardiologists to identify the risk factors and symptoms of peripartum cardiomyopathy (PPCM)**. PPCM is a life threatening disease of the heart muscle that affects women in the last month of pregnancy or within five months after delivery. The long-term goal of this study is to identify patients who are asymptomatic and treat them in the early stages of the disease thus reducing mortality and improving clinical outcomes.

“We are incredibly honored that Alpha Phi Foundation has awarded us this important grant. As one of the busiest heart failure centers in Texas, we have the unique opportunity to make a real difference in how we diagnose and treat PPCM,” said Paul O’Sullivan, CEO, Memorial Hermann Heart & Vascular Institute-Texas Medical Center. “In partnership with maternal-fetal medicine specialists at Children’s Memorial Hermann Hospital and affiliated with UTHealth Medical School, we are uniquely positioned to care for these critically ill patients, as well as conduct extensive research to combat this silent disease.”

For 58 years, Alpha Phi Foundation has focused on women's heart health as its philanthropic priority. As a result of these efforts, health care professionals and women everywhere are learning more about heart disease in women.

“We are proud to invest in Memorial Hermann’s innovative approach to better understanding the cause and treatment of PPCM,” said Ann Carstensen, executive director of Alpha Phi Foundation. “The success of this study will put us one step closer to reaching our goal of lessening the impact and incident of heart disease in all women.”

The Heart to Heart Grant is made possible by individual donors, corporate gifts, and a portion of proceeds from collegiate and alumnae chapter Red Dress events. The recipient is selected by a committee of 11 medical readers and the Alpha Phi Foundation Board of Directors.

Founded in 1956, Alpha Phi Foundation is an international nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance women's lives through the power of philanthropy. The Foundation is the philanthropic and educational partner of Alpha Phi International Fraternity. Through contributions from chapters, individuals and corporations, the Foundation funds merit- and need-based scholarships, leadership development and training, crisis aid for members in need, research and education to improve women's heart health, and other charitable and educational projects.

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