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**Alpha Phi Foundation Announces 2015 Heart to Heart Grant Recipient**

*Geisinger Health System awarded \$100,000 to bridge gap between genetic determinants and lifestyle factors linked to heart disease in women*

**Evanston, IL – February 27, 2015** – Alpha Phi Foundation is pleased to announce **Geisinger Health System** as the recipient of the 2015 Heart to Heart Grant. Awarded annually, the Heart to Heart Grant funds research and educational programs that support the improvement of women’s heart health. For nearly 60 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.

Geisinger Health System’s Heart and Vascular Institute will use this \$100,000 grant to fund a personalized medicine and education program focused on keeping women’s hearts healthy. The comprehensive Women’s Heart Health Project will bridge the gap between genetic determinants and preventable lifestyle factors linked to heart disease.

Components of the project include developing an education program for women that focuses on risk factors and prevention strategies as well as the ability to link clinical and evidence-based initiatives to community programs that promote and sustain healthy lifestyle practices.

The project will also recruit 10,000 women to participate in innovative genetic testing that can identify those at risk for cardiovascular disease due to pregnancy complications and family history of early heart attack.

Geisinger Cardiologist and Alpha Phi alumna from the Zeta Sigma chapter at Franklin and Marshall College Kimberly Skelding, MD, leads the project. “I believe this is a wonderful addition to the women’s heart and vascular disease program,” Dr. Skelding said. “It allows us to take the next steps to increase the knowledge about women’s heart disease for both our medical and lay community. It also allows us to add to the data being collected to help improve outcomes for women over time which is our goal.”

Through thoughtful outreach to patients, personalized medical care, and leading-edge research, the Women’s Heart Health Project could redefine cardiovascular health for women.

“Since 1984 more women than men have died from heart disease, yet women’s heart treatment has largely been based on medical research on men,” said Ann Carstensen, Alpha Phi Foundation executive director. “We are pleased to support Geisinger Health System in its holistic approach to heart health for women, from risk factors to prevention to treatment. Together, we have the power to save lives and move from the unknown to an empowered future.”

The Heart to Heart Grant is made possible by individual donors, corporations and a portion of proceeds from collegiate and alumnae chapter Red Dress events.

*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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