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Mercy Health Clinic Receives Award for Breast Cancer Screening

(Gaithersburg, MD) June 11, 2013 – Mercy Health Clinic received the *Breast Health Innovation Award* for Innovative Partnership from the Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County at an award ceremony last night in Washington, DC at the National Academy of Public Administration.

Since 2008, Mercy Health Clinic (MHC) has partnered with Shady Grove Adventist Hospital to provide mammograms to low-income uninsured women. In 2012 alone, over 350 women were referred for a mammogram through this partnership, with a high completion rate of 94%. Much of the Clinic's success is attributed to supporting patients with a Patient Navigator, who serves as a single point of contact and support for women throughout the process. The MHC Navigator assists patients with making a mammography appointment, giving reminders, and supporting women through follow-up appointments and treatment. The Navigator is bilingual in Spanish and assists patients with explaining and navigating an often complex system of paperwork and procedures. This sort of navigation support leads to improved outcomes, especially for low-income uninsured women with language barriers.

“Partnership is at the heart of Mercy Health Clinic and we are honored to receive this award for breast health,” said John Kleiderer, Executive Director of Mercy Health Clinic. “We are so grateful to our strong team of partners on this important issue, especially Adventist HealthCare, the Healthcare Initiative Foundation, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, and the Primary Care Coalition.”

There is a demonstrated need for breast cancer screening programs like the partnership between Mercy Health Clinic and Shady Grove Adventist Hospital. Research from the American Cancer Society indicates low-income populations receive fewer preventive services and poorer quality of care. The ACS research shows that: low-income women are less likely to receive timely screening mammograms than women with health insurance; women who are uninsured or on Medicaid are 2.5 times more likely to be diagnosed with later stage breast cancer (Stage III or IV) than privately insured women; and racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to receive inappropriate treatment for breast cancer than white patients, have poorer satisfaction with the quality of their care, and face a higher mortality rate.



MercyHealthClinic

Quality Health Care From
the Heart for Those in Need

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Mercy Health Clinic is the largest all-free clinic in Montgomery County, Maryland, serving roughly 2,000 low-income uninsured adult residents of the County. Last year, patients visited the Clinic over 14,000 times to see a board-certified physician, attend a health education class, receive medication from the Clinic's on-site pharmacy, or get lab tests drawn. All of Mercy Health Clinic's patients are within 250% of the federal poverty level, and half live below the poverty line (\$23,550 annual income for a family of four).

The Clinic relies on the service of over 70 board-certified volunteer physicians, in addition to other nurse and administrative volunteers as well as paid staff. Mercy Health Clinic is an independent, non-sectarian, non-profit community health clinic founded in 2000. The Clinic's motto is "Providing Quality Health Care from the Heart for Those in Need."

For more information on Mercy Health Clinic, visit www.mercyhealthclinic.org. For more information on the Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County's breast health initiative, visit www.breasthealthpcc.org. For more information on Adventist HealthCare's breast cancer screening program, visit <http://www.adventisthealthcare.com/health/programs/cancer/breast/>.

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