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January 23, 2013

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Health District and Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association Team Up to Become HeartSafe

As Chief and Assistant Chief of the Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association, it comes as no surprise that Phillip and Kimberly Lombardo have been committed to the Wethersfield community for many years. Alongside Health Educator Lori DiPietro from the Central Connecticut Health District, the Lombardo's attended the Wethersfield Town Council meeting on January 7, 2013, where the town was recognized as a "HeartSafe Community" by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the nation and in Connecticut, with approximately 4,500 Connecticut residents die each year from sudden cardiac events. In fact, most of these events occur outside of a hospital, away from advanced medical assistance and usually in front of family members and friends. According to DPH, a HeartSafe community is one that works together to reduce the risk of death following these sudden cardiac events. A HeartSafe community promotes and supports CPR training within the community, as well as public access to defibrillation through placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for use by medical professionals and other trained community members.

Obtaining this three-year status was no easy task, as Phillip and Kimberly learned four years ago when they began this project. The project hit a stand-still and was put aside for a later date. In August of 2012, when the project landed on Ms. DiPietro's desk, she immediately went to the first place she thought could help: the local volunteer ambulance association. It was here that the three teamed up and began the process to bring the project to its completion in January 2013.

Currently, the town is seeking approval to place the signs on both town and State roads. Once approved, the town will be decorated with ten HeartSafe road signs, placed on major roadways to indicate this status in the community.

The Wethersfield Volunteer Ambulance Association can be contacted by calling (860) 529-8022 or via email at [info@wethersfieldems.com](mailto:info@wethersfieldems.com). For more information about this or any other public health issue, please contact the Central Connecticut Health District, serving the towns of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield at [www.ccthd.org](http://www.ccthd.org) or by calling (860)721-2822.