



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Alpha Phi Foundation funds research study
to reduce the number of women killed by cardiovascular disease.
*2018 Heart to Heart Grant recipient announced.***

Evanston, IL – February 28, 2018 – Alpha Phi Foundation proudly announces **Yale School of Medicine** as the recipient of the 2018 Heart to Heart Grant. Awarded annually, the Heart to Heart Grant funds research and educational programs that support the advancement of women’s heart health and cardiac care.

Yale School of Medicine will use this \$100,000 grant to fund the #DIGIN project led by cardiologists Erica S. Spatz, MD, MHS, Lisa Freed, MD, and Sasanka Jayasuriya, MD in partnership with The Patient Revolution. This project uses a human-centered design to engage diverse groups of women in community events with a dual purpose: to provide women with a space to discuss their cardiovascular health, particularly as it relates to the use of statins; and to gather data that will be used to design decision aids for women when considering statin therapy as preventative treatment for heart disease and stroke.

Statin therapy is a key strategy in the prevention of heart disease, the leading cause of death in women over the age of 40 living in the United States, as it lowers cholesterol and reduces inflammation and oxidative stress.

“The biological effects of statins are powerful, but how much this impacts a woman’s likelihood of developing heart disease or stroke varies tremendously depending on their baseline risk. Unfortunately, many women are not aware of their risk for heart disease and we, as a medical community, don’t do a good job of communicating information about how to lower cardiovascular risk to women,” said Spatz.

Spatz and her team propose that, “If we could better equip women with the information they need about cardiovascular risk, then they could fully engage as equal partners with their clinicians in discussions on whether statin therapy is right for them. It may be the case that more women would consider this preventative step. Some may decide not to take statins, which is okay, too.”

“We are thrilled to partner with Yale School of Medicine and all of the collaborators of the #DIGIN project,” said Amy Peebles, Executive Director of Alpha Phi Foundation. “For years we’ve known that men and women’s cardiovascular health differ, and yet we are far behind in providing tools that are gender-specific and culturally-focused. We are proud to invest in this project, and we are excited to see how its long-term implications will increase knowledge and decision-making regarding prevention for heart disease in women.”

Spatz and her team plan to engage Alpha Phi members in all stages of the research project through research internships, development of the decision tools, and by hosting peer group events.

Women's heart health has been the philanthropic focus of Alpha Phi Foundation since 1946. The Heart to Heart Grant is made possible by Alpha Phi Foundation's generous community of donors. Since its inception in 1993, the grant has funded 30 cutting-edge projects focused in the advancement of women's heart health education and research.

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Alpha Phi Foundation

Founded in 1956, Alpha Phi Foundation is a 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 and individuals, the Foundation funds programming focused on five vital areas: scholarship, leadership, heritage, assistance grants to support sisters and collegiate chapters facing crisis situations, and women's heart health. For more information visit www.alphaphifoundation.org.

Yale University School of Medicine

Founded in 1810, the Yale School of Medicine is a world-renowned center for biomedical research, education and advanced healthcare. As a preeminent academic medical center, their specialized expertise, cutting-edge technology and multidisciplinary approach enables them to deliver exceptional medical care in a nurturing environment to every patient, every day. Affiliated institutions include Yale-New Haven Hospital—flagship of the Yale New Haven Hospital System and one of the largest in the United States. For more information visit <https://medicine.yale.edu/>.

The Patient Revolution

The Patient Revolution emerged from a collaboration between the Knowledge and Evaluation Research (KER) Unit at Mayo Clinic and the Warburton Family. The Patient Revolution includes a multidisciplinary team of collaborators with backgrounds in clinical practice, clinical research, design, health policy, and storytelling. They have spent more than 10 years developing tools and programs to help patients and doctors communicate more effectively. Members of their team have done extensive work in shared decision making and founded a movement for minimally disruptive medicine. For more information visit <https://patientrevolution.org/>.