



Contact: Tricia Griffin
(415) 438-5524

CHW is Primary Investor in California FreshWorks Fund, Extends Healthy Food Commitment

San Francisco, CA – July 20, 2011 – Catholic Healthcare West (CHW), the nation’s fifth largest health system, has continued its long-standing commitment to sustainable food production with a \$2.5 million investment in the California FreshWorks Fund. A project of The California Endowment, FreshWorks is a \$200 million public-private partnership loan fund created to increase access to healthy, affordable food in underserved communities, spur economic development, and inspire innovation in healthy food retailing. The Fund was announced today by First Lady Michelle Obama at a White House event.

CHW has a long history of providing capital resources to organizations and community programs that traditionally have a difficult time securing funding. Since 1992 CHW has made more than \$120 million in loans that have resulted in affordable housing, child care centers, community clinics, and other needed community resources. Its hospitals have made numerous enhancements to food offerings and a number are also hosting farmers’ markets, have planted herb/vegetable gardens on the hospital grounds, and offer healthy food seminars.

“To truly make an impact on community health we must extend our care beyond the walls of our hospitals, and there is nothing that can substitute for the benefit that healthy food and clean water gives to a community,” said Lloyd H. Dean, president/chief executive officer of CHW. “We are pleased to be working with the California Endowment and the people of California to improve the quality of life in the state.”

CHW established a healthy food pledge in 2006, which recognizes that food production and distribution systems have wide ranging impacts on ecosystems and communities. The 40-hospital system has committed to:

- Promote and source food from producers who uphold the dignity of family, farmers, workers, and their communities and support sustainable and humane agriculture systems.
- Encourage labeling that tells where a food is from and how it was produced.
- Maximize locally sourced foods that are free of unnecessary hormones, pesticides, antibiotics and which protect biodiversity.

- Promote sustainable food transportation systems and will source, when appropriate, local foods and those, which minimize inherent transportation impacts.
- Ensure that food waste is minimized and beneficially reused, and support the use of food packaging and products which are ecologically protective of the environment.

“Healthy food is defined not only by nutritional quality, but equally by a food system which is economically viable, environmentally sustainable and which supports human dignity and justice,” said Bernita McTernan, senior executive vice president of sponsorship, mission integration, and philanthropy.

In 2009 the hospital system said it would focus its food purchasing dollars on promoting sustainable food production practices, in part by seeking alternatives to foods produced with genetically engineered sugar, as well as meat and dairy produced with animal clones. The CHW position was developed in recognition of the serious health and environmental concerns these technologies raise and the threat they pose to healthier and more sustainable food production options. Among the concerns CHW is raising about genetically engineered and cloned foods are genetic contamination, increased pesticide use, animal cruelty, and the deep ethical and moral issues associated with these untested new technologies.

About Catholic Healthcare West

Catholic Healthcare West (CHW), headquartered in San Francisco, CA, is a system of 40 hospitals and medical centers in California, Arizona, and Nevada. Founded in 1986, it is one of the nation’s largest not-for-profit health care systems and the largest private hospital system in California. CHW is committed to delivering compassionate, high-quality, affordable health care services with special attention to the poor and underserved. The CHW network of nearly 10,000 physicians and approximately 54,000 employees provides health care services to more than five million people annually. In 2010, CHW provided more than \$1.3 billion in charity care, community benefit, and unreimbursed patient care. For more information, please visit our website at www.chwHEALTH.org.

###