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**Illinois Poison Center Medical Director honored as
Unsung Hero of Public Health by national foundation**

Congressman Peter Roskam nominated Michael Wahl, MD, for this prestigious honor

Chicago (January 14, 2015) – The Center for Public Health Foundation has designated Illinois Poison Center (IPC) Medical Director Michael Wahl, MD, an *Unsung Hero of Public Health*. Congressman Peter Roskam (IL-06) nominated Dr. Wahl for the Foundation’s nationwide Rock in the Pond Award, which recognizes an individual’s work on a state-wide public health effort that produced remarkable outcomes.

“It’s a tremendous honor to be recognized by the Campaign for Public Health Foundation in this capacity, and I am very humbled by Congressman Roskam’s nomination,” said Dr. Wahl, who also serves as Medical Director for the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council, the IPC’s parent organization. “I look forward to continuing to work with the Congressman on public health initiatives and other matters of importance to Illinoisans in our shared goal of improving and protecting the health of our communities.”

The IPC handles tens of thousands of poison exposure calls each year from individuals, parents and caregivers throughout the Illinois. Ninety percent of these cases can be treated at the site of exposure, saving Illinois families money by reducing the need for costly ambulance runs and emergency department visits, and freeing up medical resources to respond to and aid critical care patients.

In order to preserve the lifesaving and educational services that poison centers provide nationwide, Congressman Roskam and Dr. Wahl worked together on the *Poison Center Network Act*, which was signed into law in 2014 and makes funding for all poison centers a priority through 2019.

“Dr. Wahl’s record of achievement and his commitment to public service and to the health and well-being of Illinoisans is admirable. I am pleased to be able to recognize that commitment by having nominated him for the Foundation’s Rock in the Pond Award,” said Congressman Roskam. “His dedication has made our communities better, and I am thrilled the Campaign for Public Health Foundation has honored him an *Unsung Hero of Public Health*.”

Under Dr. Wahl’s direction, the IPC has also established and managed Illinois public health hotlines, including H1N1, MERS and Ebola. Dr. Wahl is a member of the Illinois Department of Public Health Work Group that works to combat prescription drug abuse and potential transition

to heroin use, and that has partnered with the Attorney General's office, law enforcement and public health officials to monitor the trends and limit the usage of toxins such as bath salts and synthetic drugs.

A reception honoring Dr. Wahl and other Unsung Hero award recipients will be held on Tuesday, January 27 in Washington, D.C.

For more information on the IPC, please visit illinoispoisoncenter.org.

For more information on the Center for Public Health Foundation's *Unsung Heroes of Public Health Awards*, please visit cphfoundation.org/annual_awards.html.

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*The **Illinois Poison Center** is a nonprofit health service that provides the people of Illinois with comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free, confidential 24-hour helpline staffed by specially trained physicians, nurses and pharmacists.*