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Hospital Contact
Matt E. Hartzler
(303) 651-5026
Mhartzler@luhcares.org

HealthGrades Contact
Scott Shapiro
(720) 963-6584
sshapiro@healthgrades.com

Independent Quality Study Rates Longmont United Hospital Among Nation's Best for Clinical Outcomes

Cardiac Services and Orthopedics Cited in Ninth Annual HealthGrades Quality Study

Longmont, CO - Longmont United Hospital announced it has been ranked best in region for overall cardiac care and cardiology, according to a comprehensive study released by HealthGrades, the nation's leading healthcare ratings company. This distinction ranks Longmont United Hospital among the top 10 hospitals in the state for cardiac services. Additionally, Longmont United Hospital received a five-star rating for clinical excellence in total hip replacement.

As part of its ninth annual Hospital Quality in America Study, HealthGrades independently analyzed more than 5,000 hospitals in all 50 states and the District of Columbia for its 2007 ratings, objectively assessing their clinical outcomes and quality. The 40 million hospitalization records utilized in the assessment are publicly available and licensed from the federal government's Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The HealthGrades ratings take into account varying degrees of patient severity from hospital to hospital and measure whether patient outcomes for each of more than two dozen procedures and diagnoses are better than expected (5-Star), as expected (3-Star) or worse than expected (1-Star).

"HealthGrades objectively assesses and rates hospital performance in order to help consumers make better and more informed healthcare choices," explained Samantha Collier, M.D., HealthGrades vice president of medical affairs. "With consumers having a greater stake in their healthcare purchasing decisions, it's important for them to know that there is a tremendous difference in clinical quality outcomes between hospitals."

"In Northern Colorado, Longmont United Hospital stands out notably in terms of delivering quality care for its cardiac and orthopedic patients," Collier added. "Patients, families and employers here truly have access to healthcare that is among the best in the nation."

The 2007 HealthGrades ratings for all hospitals nationwide are available, free of charge, on the organization's award-winning consumer Web site, located at www.healthgrades.com. More than three million individuals and employees of 125 major employers and health plans visit HealthGrades each month to access quality information about hospitals, nursing homes and physicians. HealthGrades also provides consumers and payers with detailed assessments of hospitals' patient-safety outcomes, based on indicators developed by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

About Longmont United Hospital

Longmont United Hospital is a full service, community hospital with specialty areas in Women's & Children's Services, Cardiology, Comprehensive Surgical Services, Cancer Care, Emergency and Trauma Services, Transitional Care and Acute Medical Services. It offers quality inpatient and outpatient health care services in addition to 24 hour emergency department services. The Emergency Department is a Level III trauma center that treats approximately 26,000 patients each year.

A full spectrum of cardiac care - from diagnosis to open heart surgery - is offered at Longmont United Hospital. In 2006 the hospital began offering Minimally Invasive Ablation, a new treatment for atrial fibrillation. Other services include cardiac catheterization, angioplasty, cardiac stents, pacemakers and defibrillators, stress testing, telemetry, echocardiology, atherectomy, and interventional radiology. There is also a specialized cardiac rehabilitation program, including an on-site fitness facility.

Comprehensive Orthopedic Services are also available including the latest surgical procedures of total joint replacements, Charite'™ Artificial Disc surgery, and kyphoplasty for vertebral compression fractures. Diagnostic equipment is state-of-the-art, including MRI/CAT, digital x-ray, and electrodiagnostics. Pre-operative Total Joint Classes are offered to the community. Physical therapy and rehabilitation are available at an on-site fitness center complete with a warm water therapy pool.

About HealthGrades

HealthGrades (Nasdaq:HGRD) is the leading healthcare ratings company, providing ratings and profiles of hospitals, nursing homes and physicians to consumers, corporations, health plans and hospitals. Millions of consumers and hundreds of the nation's largest employers, health plans and hospitals rely on HealthGrades' independent ratings to make healthcare decisions based on the quality of care. More information on the company can be found at <http://www.healthgrades.com>.