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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Longmont United Hospital
Celebrates Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month in October**

(Longmont, CO) Longmont United Hospital will join Planetree, as well as hospitals and healthcare organizations around the world this October to commemorate the third annual Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month.

“In an industry where business as usual is often based more on staff convenience than patient comfort, reorienting daily routines and standard processes to a more patient-centered approach can challenge long-held conventions,” said Susan Frampton, president of Planetree. “To foster sustainable organizational culture change requires persistence, perseverance, commitment and vision. During Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month, we applaud organizations like Longmont United Hospital that have embarked on this journey to transform the way patients and families experience healthcare. Ultimately when patients report that they feel they are being treated with dignity, respect and compassion, when families express gratitude for being treated as full partners in care, and when healthcare providers are proud of their work, the rewards are vibrant and uplifting.”

Recognizing statewide efforts to foster a patient-centered healthcare system, Governor Bill Ritter has signed a proclamation for Colorado and acknowledging Longmont United Hospital’s commitment to these values and approach to care.

Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month is sponsored and coordinated by Planetree, a not-for-profit organization based in Derby, Connecticut that partners with healthcare organizations across the globe to advance patient-centered approaches to care. Last year, several governors signed proclamations to officially recognize the event and several more are expected to participate in 2009.

Longmont United Hospital has been actively engaged in implementing the Planetree model for the past 10 years, focusing on service excellence and providing meaningful opportunities for patients and families to be actively involved in their care, such as

- Open Medical Records
- Open Visiting Hours
- Rapid Response Team that can be initiated by family members
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine program
- PrestigePLUS, senior wellness program in partnership with the City of Longmont's Senior Services
- Community Health Resource Library
- Spirituality program
- Pet Therapy and Hospital Clown programs

“Longmont United Hospital is proud to celebrate Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month and 10 years as a Planetree affiliate. We believe patient-centered care and the Planetree principles exemplify the health care that we embrace,” expressed Sharon Rominger, Chief Nursing Officer. “We continue to strive in our mission of improving the health of our patients and communities we serve.”

Several activities are planned to increase awareness about the patient-centered model of care, empower patients and inspire health care organizations to further advance and expand the practice. Highlights of the month's activities include:

- The 2009 Planetree Annual Conference will be held October 4-7 in Baltimore
- The recognition of individual health care professionals for their personal embodiment of the values of patient-centered care at the annual Spirit of Planetree Awards on October 7 concluding the 2009 Planetree Annual Conference including Michele Bowman, Director, Health Center of Intergrated Therapies, Spirit of Planetree Caregiver Award Recipient and E. Patricia Gill, M.D., Spirit of Planetree Physician Champion Award Recipient.
- U.S. governors are commemorating the event by signing proclamations recognizing Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month in their state

In addition to providing expertise and resources to healthcare leaders, Planetree also provides consumers with information on its website, www.planetree.org, including a list of Planetree hospitals by state along with a list of questions for patients to ask when choosing a hospital. Among the key practices that patients and family members would expect to find include non-restrictive visiting, processes for proactively sharing medical information with patients and ongoing opportunities for patient and family input into hospital practices.

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 has the capacity to treat approximately 45,000 patients each year. www.luhcares.org

About Planetree

Founded in 1978 by a San Francisco patient who endured a traumatic hospitalization, Planetree has been at the forefront of the effort to personalize, humanize and demystify the healthcare system for three decades. Today, the Planetree membership network is a global community of acute care hospitals, continuing care facilities, and outpatient clinics, each at various phases of the journey to transform their healthcare by considering every aspect of the healthcare experience from the perspective of their patients, and reconnecting staff to their passion for caring for others. A list of Planetree hospitals and a list of questions patients should ask hospitals are available at www.planetree.org.

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