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Longmont United Hospital to Commemorate Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month

(Longmont, CO) Longmont United Hospital will join hospitals and healthcare organizations around the world in commemorating Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month this October. Planning is underway for an array of activities designed to empower patients, strengthen the hospital's patient-centered practices, and publicly proclaim its commitment to patient-centered care. In addition, recognizing statewide efforts to foster a more patient-centered healthcare system, Governor Bill Ritter has signed a proclamation commemorating October 2008 as Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month in Colorado and acknowledging Longmont United Hospital's commitment to practicing patient-centered care.

Now in its second year, Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month is an awareness-building campaign to commemorate progress toward making patient-centered care a reality and building momentum for further advancing and expanding the practice of patient-centered care, an approach to healthcare in which healthcare givers partner with patients and families to satisfy the full range of patient needs.

"We certainly hope that when patients and their loved ones come to Longmont United Hospital, they feel safe, secure, and well cared for," said CEO Mitchell C. Carson. "But we consider these the minimum expectations for care. As a hospital committed to providing patient-centered care, we want patients who come to Longmont United Hospital to expect more. We want them to expect to be treated as partners in their own care. We want them to expect ample information about their treatment in language they can understand. Moreover, we want them to expect that when they go home they will feel confident to manage their healthcare needs. This Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month campaign is an opportunity for us to reinforce to our patients and their families what they can anticipate from us as a patient-centered hospital."

Longmont United Hospital has been actively engaged in implementing the Planetree model of patient-centered care for the past 10 years, focusing on service excellence, and providing meaningful opportunities for patients and families to be actively involved in their care. As part of Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month, Longmont United Hospital will display an official declaration of its commitment to the values that define patient-centered care, among them:

- *"A patient is an individual to be cared for, not just a medical condition to be treated."*
- *"Each staff member is a caregiver, whose role is to meet the needs of each patient."*
- *"Our patients' family and friends are also partners and we welcome their involvement."*
- *"It is our responsibility to maximize patients' opportunities for choices and to respect those choices."*
- *"Our patients are our partners and have knowledge and expertise that is essential to their care."*

There is also a quilt on display with each square depicting what patient-centered care means to each department.

About Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month

Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month is sponsored and coordinated by Planetree, Inc.; a not-for-profit organization based in Derby, Connecticut that partners with healthcare organizations around the world to

advance patient-centered approaches to care. Consistent with the dual objective of Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month to both celebrate progress made and expand the practice of patient-centered care, in October Planetree will release a Patient-Centered Care Improvement Guide as a complimentary resource for any healthcare organization striving to be more patient-centered. The development of the guide was funded by the Picker Institute, an international non-profit organization that supports research in the field of patient-centered care. In addition, the Picker Institute is funding a daylong Patient-Centered Care CEO Summit on October 23, 2008 in Chicago that will focus on strategies for comprehensively transforming the patient and staff experience. The Patient-Centered Care Improvement Guide will be released at the CEO Summit, after which it will be made widely available on-line.

“In an industry where business as usual is often based more on tasks and system needs rather 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.”

Beyond recognizing institutions committed to practicing patient-centered care, the month also includes the recognition of individual healthcare professionals being honored for their personal embodiment of the values of patient-centered care. The Spirit of Planetree Awards will be presented at the 2008 Planetree Annual Conference to be held October 19-22 in Chicago, Illinois. Among the recipients will be Longmont United Hospital’s Betty Trueblood-Smith Spirit of Planetree Caregiver Award and Mary Faini, M.D. Spirit of Planetree Physician Champion Award.

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.

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 more than 140 acute care hospitals, continuing care facilities, and outpatient clinics, each at various phases of the journey to transform the 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 complete list of Planetree hospitals is available at www.planetree.org.

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