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Central Ohio Hospitals Provide Significant Contributions to Community

Economic impact, care for indigent, quality improvement cited in new report

The Central Ohio Hospital Council today is releasing "Our Contributions to the Community," a report highlighting the many contributions of Franklin County's 12 hospitals to the central Ohio community. Among the contributions made by local hospitals are:

- \$11.1 billion in economic benefits for households and businesses throughout central Ohio;
- \$462 million in community benefit for care and services for which the hospitals were not reimbursed;
- Improved quality of patient care through collaboration and sharing best of practices.

The COHC report is available online at

www.centralohiohospitals.org/documents/COH_2011Report_Web.pdf

Included in the report is a Franklin County hospital economic contribution study, performed by Driscoll and Fleeter, which shows:

- Hospitals employed 36,295 full- and part-time employees in 2009, nearly as many as Nationwide Insurance, Honda of America, Limited Brands, Cardinal Health, Huntington Bancshares and American Electric Power combined.
- An additional 35,200 jobs are sustained in the community, as well as \$1.7 billion being created in revenue for other local businesses, as a result of hospital employees using their earnings to purchase goods and services;
- One in nine jobs is due to our local hospitals, according to the Columbus Chamber.
- 2009 hospital expenditures totaled \$5.5 billion. The ripple effect totals \$11.1 billion in economic activity for other businesses, and represents 16 percent of Franklin County's total economic output, according to the Columbus Chamber.

The Franklin County Community Benefit study shows local hospitals:

- Provided more than \$189 million in free care for people without insurance or who are unable to pay their hospital bills, a 183 percent increase over the last six years;
- Provided more than \$174 million in free care to Medicaid patients, a 57 percent increase over 2008 levels;
- Contributed nearly \$172 million to numerous programs, services and activities that improve the health of our citizens, for which they were not reimbursed.

Also highlighted in the COHC report are initiatives undertaken by central Ohio hospitals to improve the quality and safety of patient care. One such initiative is Ohio Better Birth Outcomes, which seeks to reduce incidents of preterm birth. Under OBBO, pregnant women who have had a previous preterm birth are asked to receive weekly progesterone treatments – a therapy shown to increase gestational age by 35 percent. Since the hospitals began reporting data in January, pregnant women participating in the program have had, on average, a gestational age at delivery of 35 weeks and 1 day, compared to a gestational age of 28 weeks and 1 day over their earliest preterm birth.

“The people of Franklin County should be proud that their local hospitals can put aside competitive differences and come together to address issues collaboratively. In the area of quality improvement, by working together, hospitals are able to learn from each other and share and implement best practices. The true winners are patients, through better quality of care, and local employers, through savings in health care costs,” said Jeff Klingler, president of the Hospital Council.

The COHC report also touts the long-standing tradition of Franklin County hospitals to provide an “equal access” system to all patients, regardless of their ability to pay for services. All Franklin County hospitals provide medically necessary care free-of-charge to patients earning up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Hospitals also provide significant discounts to patients with family incomes between 200 and 400 percent of the poverty level.

“In no other community in the country have hospitals agreed to follow the same guidelines when providing free and discounted care to the indigent. Our equal access system is not only unique, it also is vital to our sense of community in central Ohio,” Klingler said.

About the Central Ohio Hospital Council

The Central Ohio Hospital Council was created in 2008 and represents Columbus’ four hospital systems: Mount Carmel Health System, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, The Ohio State University Medical Center and OhioHealth. The Hospital Council serves as the forum for community hospitals to collaborate with each other and with other community stakeholders to improve the quality, value and accessibility of health care in the central Ohio region. More information is available at www.centralohiohospitals.org