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New National Program Recognizes Hospitals Excelling in Providing Patient-Centered Care - Five Hospitals Become First Nationwide to be Named Designated Planetree Patient-Centered Hospitals

Planetree, Inc. has announced that Fauquier Hospital (Warrenton, VA); Mid-Columbia Medical Center (The Dalles, OR); Northern Westchester Hospital (Mount Kisco, NY); Sharp Coronado Hospital and Healthcare Center (Coronado, CA); and Valley View Hospital (Glenwood Springs, CO) are the first hospitals nationwide to be officially named "Designated Planetree Patient-Centered Hospitals."

The announcement was the culmination of a two-year pilot initiative developed by Planetree to both formally distinguish hospitals excelling at delivering patient-centered care, as well as to provide a more consistent understanding -- among consumers and within the healthcare industry -- of what it means to be a patient-centered hospital.

"We are deeply proud to call these five outstanding hospitals Designated Planetree Patient-Centered Hospitals," said Susan Frampton, President of Planetree, an internationally-recognized not-for-profit organization that partners with healthcare providers around the globe to advance patient-centered approaches to care.

"The criteria they met were rigorous, and having done so, they have clearly set themselves apart as forward-thinking institutions whose physical environments, policies and practices reflect a commitment organization-wide to providing healthcare the way patients want it delivered. And while they differ vastly in bed-size, geography, demographics and their specific approaches to patient-centered care, each is an extraordinary model of what it looks like to provide care that is informed by, reflective of and responsive to the patient perspective."

Planetree's Patient-Centered Hospital Designation Program is the only formal designation program that recognizes individual hospitals' achievement and innovation in fostering an organizational culture that prioritizes patient comfort, dignity, empowerment and well-being. Designated hospitals are also recognized by The Joint Commission on its Quality Check website, a resource created to help consumers make informed decisions about where to go for their healthcare.

For the five recognized hospitals, the road to designation has lasted far longer than the two-year pilot process. As Planetree-affiliated hospitals, each has exhibited an enduring commitment to implementing the Planetree model of patient-centered care. Guided by the model's ten core components (Human Interactions; Access to Information; Family Involvement; Nutrition; A Healing Environment; Positive Diversions; Caring Touch; Spirituality and Diversity; Integrative Therapies; and Healthy Communities), each designated hospital has developed an extensive array of initiatives and practices designed to enhance the patient experience while also supporting the professional and personal aspirations of their staff.

These core components also guided the development of the Patient-Centered Hospital Designation criteria which outline more than 40 practices that patients and family members would expect to find in a patient-centered healthcare environment. These criteria were further informed by hundreds of focus group sessions conducted by Planetree over the past decade during which patients from across the country shared first-hand what is most important and meaningful to them when they are in a hospital.

Among the key practices in place in some form at every Designated Planetree Patient-Centered Hospital are non-restrictive visiting, processes for proactively sharing medical information with patients; and ongoing opportunities for patient and family input into hospital practices. Other criteria include that staff participate in training to sensitize them to the patient experience, and that the hospital's physical environment is a healing one engaging all the senses. The designated sites also meet or exceed national performance benchmarks for patient satisfaction and quality.

The pilot phase and formal launch of the designation program are being spearheaded by Planetree's Designation Advisory Committee whose membership includes hospital administrators, business leaders, and national healthcare experts. Similar designation programs are currently being developed by Planetree for continuing care, rehab and behavioral health settings. The launch of the program was celebrated as part of Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month, which is being commemorated by hospitals around the country and internationally.

Founded in 1978 by a San Francisco patient who endured a traumatic healthcare experience, Planetree (www.planetree.org) has been at the forefront of the effort to personalize, humanize, and demystify the healthcare system for nearly three decades. With its model of patient-centered care being implemented in more than 125 acute care hospitals, continuing care facilities, outpatient clinics, and consumer health libraries across North America and abroad, Planetree is demonstrating that patient-centered care is not only an empowering philosophy, but a viable, vital, and cost-effective model of care.

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