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Five Architecture and Design Firms Certified by Planetree Visionary Design Network

Derby, Conn.— Planetree has certified five architecture and design firms as part of the new Planetree Visionary Design Network:

- Albert Kahn Associates, Inc.
- Earl Swensson Associates, Inc.
- HMC Architects
- Huelat Parimucha Ltd.
- Kahler Slater

The five firms were honored at the 2009 Annual Conference in Baltimore, October 4-7. This new certification establishes these firms as specialists in evidence-based health care design following the Planetree philosophy and its core components of healing design; such as welcoming a patient’s family and friends, valuing human beings over technology, enabling patients to fully participate as care partners and fostering a connection to nature and beauty.

“These charter members of Planetree Visionary Design Network are leaders in the field serving as catalysts for change in healing design. They fully embrace Planetree’s philosophy of building and designing healing environments that provide the greatest opportunity for caring of the body, mind and spirit from the perspective of the patients, families and caregivers who utilize the facility,” said Planetree Director of Design Consultation Kim Montague, AIA, LEED AP. “Additionally, the certified firms exhibit a healing environment within their own organizations through the integration of sustainable practices and staff-friendly working environments.”

Through the integration of evidence-based design principles into their design projects, such as views and access to nature, clear wayfinding, and addressing privacy, each firm has excelled in their implementation of the Planetree philosophy. Projects that were toured as part of the certification process include Loma Linda University Medical Center East Campus and the Aurora Women’s Pavilion.

Firms applying for Planetree Visionary Design Network certification are required to submit a self assessment tool and an application. Following acceptance of the application, an interview is held with firm leadership to discuss the organization's commitment to healing environments, evidence-based design and principles of design excellence and innovation. Demonstration of knowledge base and a cultural assessment of the applicant firm are the key components for this visit. Once the interview is completed, each firm is asked to select one project for two representatives from Planetree Design Advisory Council to visit and assess the physical environment as it relates to the Planetree model of care and key aspects of a healing environment appealing to the five senses. 2010 applications will be due in March.

Certification assists hospitals that are planning construction or remodeling, especially Planetree members, in finding a firm committed to the same patient-centered care philosophy.

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 health care 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 to download at www.planetree.org.

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