



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Nation's Hospitals Celebrate Putting Patients First
During Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month
*What Questions Should Patients Be Asking Hospitals?***

October 3, 2008—Hospitals and healthcare organizations around the country will join Planetree this October to commemorate the second 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 the many organizations 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, optimal care can be delivered.

Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month is sponsored and coordinated by Planetree, Inc., a not-for-profit organization based in Derby, Connecticut, partnering with healthcare organizations to advance patient-centered approaches to care.

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

- Governors from across the U.S. are commemorating the event by signing proclamations recognizing Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month in their state
- In partnership with the Picker Institute, Planetree will introduce a *Patient-Centered Care Improvement Guide*, a new publication providing valuable, easy-to-follow information that will be made available at no charge to all healthcare organizations starting October 23.
- The 2008 Planetree Annual Conference and 30th Anniversary Celebration will be held October 19-22 in Chicago
- A Patient-Centered Care CEO Summit will be held on October 23

- The launch of the second edition of the award-winning book, *Putting Patients First*, containing significant new content
- The recognition of individual healthcare professionals for their personal embodiment of the values of patient-centered care at the annual Spirit of Planetree Awards Dinner on October 22 concluding the 2008 Planetree Annual Conference
- Hospitals nationwide are displaying proclamations to publicly declare their commitment to the values of patient-centered care, among them that “a patient is an individual to be cared for, not just a medical condition to be treated” and “each staff member is a caregiver, whose role is to meet the needs of each patient.”
- Hospitals are coordinating a variety of events as well as distributing “I Am An Expert About Me” stickers to patients, and staff members are wearing “I Am Listening” stickers.

In addition to providing expertise and resources to healthcare leaders, Planetree 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 in a patient-centered hospital include non-restrictive visiting, processes for proactively sharing medical information with patients and ongoing opportunities for patient and family input into hospital practices.

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 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 complete list of Planetree hospitals is available at www.planetree.org.

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