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St. Francis Hospital Announces New HMO/POS and PPO Contracts With Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia

COLUMBUS, Ga. - St. Francis Hospital is pleased to announce that an agreement for a five-year contract with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia (BCBSGa) has been signed, enabling St. Francis to rejoin the BCBSGa HMO/POS and PPO networks, effective July 15, 2006. It means that BCBSGa HMO, POS, and PPO members throughout Georgia will be able to once again utilize St. Francis Hospital as an "in-network" provider.

"Our patients and the people in our community and region come first at St. Francis," said Robert Granger, president and CEO of St. Francis Hospital. "Throughout the negotiation process, our focus has been on determining what is best for them. We wanted to ensure that they will be able to access our services when they need medical care, and this agreement does that."

"We are pleased to welcome St. Francis Hospital to the BCBSGa HMO/POS and PPO networks," said Caz Matthews, president, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia. "Providing our members with access to affordable, quality healthcare is our primary goal, and we are looking forward to continuing to meet this goal with St. Francis Hospital."

About St. Francis Hospital

St. Francis Hospital, Inc. is a licensed 376-bed voluntary, not-for-profit hospital owned by the citizens of the area that the hospital serves. It is one of Georgia's finest hospitals and the region's premier provider of cardiac care. St. Francis also meets the needs of our community by providing emergency services, a full range of medical/surgical services, rehabilitation, women's services, child, adolescent, and adult mental health services, home medical equipment, a resource center and assisted living. St. Francis has approximately 1,400 employees and 350 board-certified physicians. You can visit us on the web at www.wecareforlife.com.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and is an operating subsidiary of WellPoint Inc., the largest publicly traded commercial health benefits company in terms of membership in the United States. WellPoint, Inc. is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and serves its members as the Blue Cross licensee for California; the Blue Cross and Blue Shield licensee for Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area), Nevada, New Hampshire, New York (as Blue Cross Blue Shield in 10 New York City metropolitan counties and as Blue Cross, Blue Shield or Blue Cross Blue shield in selected upstate counties only), Ohio, Virginia (excluding the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C.), Wisconsin; and through UniCare. Additional information about WellPoint is available at www.wellpoint.com. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia can be found on the web at www.bcbsga.com.

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