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New Analysis Shows Hospitals Continue to Implement Palliative Care Programs at Rapid Pace

New Medical Subspecialty Fills Gap for Aging Population

New York, NY — According to a new Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) analysis of the latest data released from the *2008 American Hospital Association (AHA) Annual Survey of Hospitals*, U.S. hospitals continue to implement palliative care programs at a rapid pace. The CAPC analysis shows that 1299 hospitals (31%) nationwide provide palliative care programs today. This is compared to just 632 programs in 2000. Most significantly, hospitals with over 50 beds – the most likely to have a program – show a penetration of 47%.

"Palliative care represents a paradigm shift in how we treat serious illness in America. Ten years ago there were almost no hospital palliative care programs in the U.S. But if we're going to meet the needs of an aging population, it's going to be necessary for every hospital to have a program," said Dr. Diane Meier, Director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care.

Of the 4,136 hospitals appropriate for palliative care programs (psychiatric and rehab hospitals are excluded):

- 31% have a program
- 47% with over 50 beds have a program
- 77% with over 250 beds (large size hospitals) have a program

Features commonly associated with hospitals that provide a palliative care consultation service are:

- JCAHO accreditation
- Cancer program approved by the American College of Surgeons
- COTH member hospital (Council of Teaching Hospitals)
- Catholic church operated
- Large size (i.e., over 250 beds)

About Palliative Care

Palliative care is the medical subspecialty focused on relief of the pain, symptoms and stress of serious illness. The goal is to ensure the highest quality of life possible for patients and their families. Palliative medicine treats serious illness regardless of prognosis, and patients can receive it at any point in their illness, with or without curative treatment.

By 2030, it is expected that the number of older Americans will have more than doubled to 70 million — or one in every five Americans. With the availability of advanced medical technologies the growing numbers of older adults are expected to live longer, but often with serious, chronic and costly illnesses. By improving physical and psychological symptoms, caregiver well-being, and patient/family/doctor

communication, palliative medicine is widely viewed as an important solution to the mounting problems faced by patients, families and the healthcare system.

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The Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) provides health care professionals with the tools, training and technical assistance necessary to start and sustain successful palliative care programs in hospitals and other health care settings. Located in New York City, CAPC is a national organization dedicated to increasing the availability of quality palliative care services for people facing serious illness. Direction and technical assistance is provided by Mount Sinai School of Medicine. www.capc.org

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