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**The Good Samaritan Hospital Has Been Designated as a
Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care®**

Lebanon, PA – Highmark Blue Shield of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania has designated The Good Samaritan Hospital of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, as a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care. To date, more than 400 facilities nationwide have received a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care designation.

The need for quality cardiac care is urgent: The American Heart Association estimates that this year alone, 1.2 million Americans will experience a first or recurrent heart attack. Blue Distinction Centers for Cardiac Care demonstrate their commitment to quality care, resulting in better overall outcomes for cardiac patients. The Good Samaritan Hospital meets evidence-based clinical criteria, developed in collaboration with expert physicians' and medical organizations, including the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), and is subject to periodic re-evaluation as criteria continue to evolve.*

“We are honored to be selected as a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care,” said John C. Darrell, MD, chairman, Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, The Good Samaritan Hospital. “This designation reflects our daily efforts to combine the best evidence-based clinical practices with our ‘down home’ approach to communicating with patients. We emphasize our philosophy of the best cardiac care available, close to home – and those efforts show in our excellent clinical results for patients.”

“Our program has grown tremendously over the past several years,” said Thomas M. Clemens, MD, vice chairman, Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, The Good Samaritan Hospital. “As we added new services such as electrophysiology and thoracic procedures, this designation affirms that our patient outcomes are consistently strong throughout the entire program.”

The Good Samaritan Hospital offers comprehensive cardiac care services, including inpatient cardiac care, cardiac rehabilitation, cardiac catheterization and cardiac surgery (including coronary artery bypass graft surgery).

“This program supports Highmark’s consumerism approach to give members a greater hand in their health by providing tools to help members make informed choices about their health care,” said Carey Vinson, M.D., vice president for quality and medical performance management at Highmark Blue Shield. “The Blue Distinction Centers designation offers members reliable quality-based information pertaining to Blue network-participating facilities when selecting a provider.”

“Blue Distinction puts a high value on research and evidence-based health and medical information,” says Allan Korn, MD, Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association Chief Medical Officer. “Blue Distinction Centers show our commitment to working with doctors and hospitals in communities across the country to identify leading institutions that meet clinically validated quality standards and deliver better overall outcomes in patient care.”

To be designated as a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care, The Good Samaritan Hospital met the selection criteria posted at www.BCBS.com, which includes:

- an established cardiac care program, performing required annual volumes for certain procedures (e.g. a minimum of 125 cardiac surgical procedures annually, including both CABG and/or valve surgery)
- appropriate experience of its cardiac team, including sub-specialty board certification for interventional cardiologists and cardiac surgeons
- an established acute care inpatient facility, including intensive care, emergency and a full range of cardiac services
- full accreditation by The Joint Commission, Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP) or national equivalent
- low overall complication and mortality rates
- a comprehensive quality management program

Blue Distinction is a designation awarded by Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield companies to medical facilities that have demonstrated expertise in delivering quality healthcare. The designation is based on rigorous, evidence-based selection criteria established in collaboration with expert physicians’ and medical organizations’ recommendations. Today, more than 800 Blue Distinction Center designations have been awarded to facilities nationwide, providing consumers with a framework for making informed decisions on where to go for specialty care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, and transplants.

* These organizations have provided information and input, but do not formally endorse the Blue Distinction Centers program.

Note: Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading professional organizations' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at any facility, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.

For 120 years, the Good Samaritan Health System has served the health care needs of Lebanon County. The Good Samaritan Hospital is a modern, fully-equipped, fully-accredited 172-bed acute care facility that offers complete inpatient and outpatient care, as well as an inpatient rehabilitation program. The health system also provides services at many other sites located throughout Lebanon County. (###)