

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 25, 2009

Contact: Maia Kotlus-Gates
(202) 261-2878
maia.kotlus-gates@mslworldwide.com

LOCAL HOSPITAL SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL CARDIAC CARE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT EFFORT

Part of the local 'Aligning Forces for Quality' program, the effort will focus on improving cardiovascular care for African-American and Hispanic patients

Memphis, Tenn. – The Healthy Memphis Common Table today announced that Methodist North Hospital has been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to participate in a new effort to improve the quality—and equality—of cardiac care delivered in hospitals. The *Aligning Forces for Quality*: Equity Quality Improvement Collaborative (Equity QI Collaborative) will identify and test ways for hospitals to improve the quality and efficiency of their cardiac care, while also identifying and reducing any racial and ethnic disparities.

The Equity QI Collaborative is part of Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q), the Foundation's signature program to lift the overall quality of health care in targeted communities, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and provide models for real reform. Memphis was selected by RWJF as one of 15 communities nationwide to serve as 'learning laboratories' for improving the quality of care being delivered in a given region. The Healthy Memphis Common Table coordinates local efforts for the program.

"In every region involved in the Aligning Forces for Quality initiative, including Memphis, broad-based teams of people who get, give and pay for care are working together to improve health care quality," said Reneé Frazier, executive director of the Healthy Memphis Common Table. "By aligning people from across the community who might not typically work together, we are helping to achieve a community-wide transformation of health care."

Although the quality of health care is poor for many Americans, research shows specific racial and ethnic groups continue to experience lower-quality health care when compared to white patients. The well-respected Institute of Medicine has shown that patients who are racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to receive lower-quality care than whites, particularly when treating heart disease and cancer.

"Because we serve a large population of African-American and Hispanic patients, we were eager to participate in this effort," said Michael Ugwueke, CEO, Methodist North Hospital. "Nothing is more important to us than providing high-quality care to every patient we treat. We're proud of our record of care, and look forward to sharing our expertise with other hospitals nationwide and learning from them as well."

- more -

Led by RWJF, the Equity QI Collaborative will be overseen by the Center for Health Care Quality at The George Washington University Medical Center School of Public Health and Health Services, which serves as the national program office for the *Aligning Forces for Quality* initiative.

For more information, visit www.healthymemphis.org or www.rwjf.org.

###

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

Healthy Memphis Common Table (HMCT), founded in 2004, is a non-profit coalition of community partners, agencies, churches, schools, individuals, governments and businesses working together to improve the health of everyone in Greater Memphis. HMCT initiatives include reducing obesity and diabetes, reducing disparities in health care and educating patients about quality care. In 2008, HMCT was recognized as a promising national model for a regional health collaborative by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information and how to take charge for better health, visit www.healthymemphis.org