



For Immediate Release:

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BayCare Clinic Cardiologist Receives National Recognition for Providing Quality Cardiovascular and Stroke Care

Heart/Stroke Recognition Program measures performance in key areas of cardiovascular and stroke care

Green Bay, WI, December 22, 2008 – BayCare Clinic (www.baycare.net) is pleased to announce that William Witmer, MD of BayCare Clinic Cardiology, has received recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association (AHA/ASA) for their Heart/Stroke Recognition Program. This recognition is awarded to Dr. Witmer for providing quality care to his patients with cardiovascular disease or who have had a stroke. Witmer is one of several physicians within BayCare Clinic Cardiology who have achieved this recognition.

The Heart/Stroke Recognition Program was designed to improve the quality of care that patients with cardiovascular disease or who have had a stroke receive by recognizing physicians who deliver quality cardiovascular and stroke care, and by motivating other physicians to document and improve their delivery of cardiovascular and stroke care. To receive recognition, which is valid for three years (beginning October 2008), Witmer submitted data that demonstrates performance that meets the Program's key cardiovascular and stroke care

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measures. These measures include blood pressure and cholesterol control, among others. When people with cardiovascular disease or who have had a stroke receive quality care as outlined by these measures, they are less likely to suffer additional complications, such as a second heart attack or stroke.

The American Heart Association/American Stroke Association believes that quality patient care translates into lives saved, and that is why they are supporting a recognition program for physicians providing quality care. The program closes the gap by putting into practice American Heart Association/American Stroke Association guidelines and statements to fight heart disease and stroke.

More than 60 million Americans have one or more types of cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, responsible for approximately 950,000 deaths each year. Approximately 700,000 Americans suffer a stroke each year; stroke is the third-leading cause of death and a leading cause of severe, long-term disability. Despite evidence that reducing cholesterol levels and controlling high blood pressure prevent further health complications, many cardiac and stroke patients are not treated effectively for these symptoms.

The American Heart Association spent almost \$389 million during fiscal year 2001-2002 on research support, public and professional education, and community programs. The organization has more than 22.5 million volunteers and supporters carrying out its mission in communities across the country. The association is the largest voluntary health organization fighting heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, which annually kill about 950,000 Americans.

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The goal of the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, is to raise awareness of stroke and reduce disability and death from stroke. In its 2001-2002 fiscal year, the American Stroke Association spent almost \$86 million on stroke-related research and education programs.

NCQA is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality. NCQA accredits and certifies a wide range of health care organizations and recognizes physicians in key clinical areas. NCQA's Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) is the most widely used performance measurement tool in health care. NCQA is committed to providing health care quality information through the Web, media and data licensing agreements in order to help consumers, employers and others make more informed health choices. For further information please visit www.ncqa.org/hsrp.

Witmer practices with Dr. David Mathias, Dr. Benjamin Rhee, Dr. Ramon Ray G. Rayel and Dr. Francis G. Wolf, at BayCare Clinic Cardiology's main office, located at Aurora BayCare Medical Center, 2845 Greenbrier Road, Green Bay. Witmer also sees patients in Sturgeon Bay.

BayCare Clinic is the largest physician-owned specialty-care clinic in Northeast Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It is comprised of over 100 specialty physicians with expertise in more than 20 specialties. BayCare Clinic physicians have served patients in Green Bay and the surrounding region for over 25 years.

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