

TO MEDIA:
CONTACT PERSON: Robin Jennings
Marketing and Communications
Excelsa Health
724-516-4483 CELL
724-689-0206 OFFICE

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**EXCELA HEALTH CONTINUES PRESTIGIOUS ACCREDITATION
AS HEALTH CARE LEADER FOR CARDIOVASCULAR CARE**

GREENSBURG, PA, March 1, 2015 ... The Accreditation for Cardiovascular Excellence (ACE) program has awarded continuing accreditation to Excelsa Health's cardiac catheterization laboratory and angioplasty/stenting program. ACE accreditation recognizes the commitment of clinicians and staff to quality assurance, peer review and use of evidence-based guidelines and is considered a standard bearer for leadership in health care quality.

This latest recognition extends Excelsa Health's ACE credentialing for another two years. Excelsa Health received initial accreditation in 2012 and was the first health system in Pennsylvania and only the fifth in the nation to receive it. Likewise, Excelsa Health is the first in the state to be reaccredited.

"ACE standards are even more rigorous than when we initially certified," said Howard P. Grill, MD, FACC, medical director of Excelsa's cardiac cath lab. "We have continued to modify our practices and adapt to these stringent guidelines to ensure we meet the quality measures ACE sets forth. We are honored that the result of our efforts meets their criteria for providing the safest, highest quality, evidence-based care possible."

ACE is the global leader in accreditation and external quality review services for all catheter-based cardiovascular procedures. An independent organization sponsored by the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions (SCAI) and the American College of Cardiology Foundation (ACCF), ACE offers independent evaluation and monitoring of facilities that provide cardiovascular care. By reviewing facility and operator performance and comparing clinical decision-making to nationally accepted best practices, ACE quality review and accreditation services play a critical role in continuous quality improvement programs.

“ACE’s goals are to help facilities achieve better patient care in their community and to increase the consistency of superior patient care in cardiovascular procedures throughout the United States,” said Bonnie Weiner, M.D., MSEC, MBA, FSCAI, chief medical officer and chair of ACE’s Board of Directors, and director of interventional cardiology research at Saint Vincent Hospital at Worcester Medical Center, Worcester, Mass. “By seeking ACE cardiac catheterization accreditation, Excelsa Health has shown that it has an uncompromising commitment to provide safe, high-quality care. The willingness to be evaluated against nationally-accepted gold standard practices demonstrates a desire to meet the highest quality standards set by experts in cardiac and endovascular care.”

ACE is sponsored by the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions and the American College of Cardiology Foundation, the two leading professional cardiovascular organizations, jointly representing more than 40,000 practitioners.

ACE provides professional review of facilities where invasive cardiac and endovascular procedures are performed and accredits those that achieve predetermined benchmarks for quality care.

“Excelsa Health’s re-accreditation recognizes our unwavering commitment to excellence in cardiac catheterization,” said Robert J. Rogalski, chief executive officer, Excelsa Health. “We have set high standards for our physicians and members of the cardiac cath lab team and hold them accountable for delivering an exemplary level of care. Achieving this recognition is a tribute to all those involved with our cardiovascular services.. This rigorous review and outstanding recognition of our cardiac catheterization services reflects to all those we serve how deeply committed we are to practicing medicine with quality and integrity in an environment that puts patients first.”

“We intend to maintain the standards established by ACE and adhere to identified best practices,” added Rogalski. “Our patients deserve nothing less.”

Recent studies have shown accreditation improves patient outcomes and promotes progress toward enhanced patient safety standards. Health systems seeking accreditation complete a comprehensive application followed by a site visit from ACE’s team of expert reviewers who assess the facility itself, its personnel, quality assurance and safety protocols, patient indications and outcomes.

“Because we employ a standardized, unbiased assessment, patients who are treated at an ACE-accredited cardiovascular center should feel confident the facility has taken the appropriate, evidence-based steps to help ensure the best care for each individual patient,” said Dr. Weiner.

Programs that achieve full accreditation are recognized by ACE for two years, at which time their facility must be reviewed again for continued recognition. ACE also provides tools and guidance for quality improvement and is committed to helping facilities achieve the highest standards of care.

SIDEBAR: About Catheterization and Stenting:

Cardiac catheterization is a procedure whereby a small catheter is advanced to the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle itself. This is done in order to take X-ray images of the inside of the arteries so that the cardiologist can see if there are any severe blockages that might be impeding blood flow. If such blockages are present, and if the anatomy suggests that stenting would be the best therapy, the stenting procedure can often be performed at the same time as the catheterization.

Stenting involves advancing a very small tubular metal stent mounted on a small balloon (on the order of a few millimeters in size) to the site of blockage and using the balloon to expand the stent into the wall of the artery to hold open the blocked area.

Stenting is a very effective therapy when applied to the right patient and to the appropriate blockages. Part of the ACE accreditation involves having a system in place to ensure that the procedure is used appropriately.