TO MEDIA:
CONTACT PERSON: Jennifer Miele
Vice President, Marketing and Communications
Excela Health

CELL: 724-672-0605
E:MAIL: jmiele@excelahealth.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXCELA HEALTH'S CARDIAC CATH LAB FIRST IN PENNSYLVANIA TO EARN ACE ACCREDITATION

GREENSBURG, PA, Jan. 25, 2012 … The Accreditation for Cardiovascular Excellence (ACE) program has awarded accreditation to Excela 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. Excela Health is the first health system in Pennsylvania to seek accreditation and only the fifth in the nation to receive it.

"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 U.S.," 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, Excela 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. ACE's accreditation programs currently include programs that deliver angiography to diagnose blocked arteries (cardiac catheterization), angioplasty and stenting to treat blockages in the arteries of the heart (percutaneous coronary interventions, or PCI) as well as blockages in the arteries of the neck (carotid artery stenting, or CAS). ACE has plans to expand to accreditation programs for other cardiovascular procedures. ACE is currently reviewing other PCI and CAS program applications, with additional accreditation awards expected in the coming months.

"For Excela Health to earn accreditation recognizing excellence in its cardiac catheterization program is a hard won honor," said Robert J. Rogalski, chief executive officer, Excela 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 over the past eight months. 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."

Excela Health voluntarily sought accreditation as part of a program rebuilding process after an internal audit and independent external review of patient data called into question the appropriateness of stenting procedures for some patients.

"Over the last eight months the entire cath lab staff here at Excela has worked diligently to assess where we stand and to reorganize the cath lab from the ground up with the singular focus of providing the safest, highest quality, evidence-based care possible," said Howard P. Grill, MD, FACC, medical director of Excela's cardiac cath lab. "We are all honored that ACE has seen the result of our efforts and feels it meets their extremely rigorous certification requirements."

"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.

Facilities seeking ACE accreditation can obtain more information and complete the application process at www.cvexcel.org.

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.