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Jersey City Medical chosen as state's best hospital *Named by Physicians Throughout New Jersey*

To the employees, medical staff and Board of Trustees at Jersey City Medical Center, there has been a growing belief that the hospital was on its way to becoming one of the leading acute care facilities in the state.

Its selection yesterday as the number one hospital in the state just confirmed it.

"Using a slogan like 'Enhancing Life,' in our marketing efforts is fine, but in order to resonate with people you need to be able to back it up," said Joseph Scott, President and CEO of LibertyHealth, which operates and manages the hospital. "This recognition goes a long way to showing that we can also walk the walk and talk the talk."

Inside Jersey and Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., one of the nation's most respected health care research and information companies, officially announced on Sunday in newspapers throughout the state its highly anticipated annual ranking of hospitals in New Jersey. The process involved reaching out to licensed physicians throughout the state and asking them to name the top hospitals for various medical conditions, as well as overall care.

Doctors were asked to vote for the five leading hospitals among the state's 73 acute care facilities for treatment of the following conditions: breast cancer, prostate cancer, pediatric cancers, coronary artery bypass surgery, hip and knee replacement, congestive heart failure, stroke, high-risk pregnancy and birth,

and neurological disorders. They were also asked to vote for the top overall hospitals in New Jersey.

Additionally, through IPRO (Improving Healthcare for the Common Good), post-discharge ratings of New Jersey hospitals were determined by having patients rate the hospitals overall as well as on how often doctors and nurses communicate well with patients, and the cleanliness of patient rooms and bathrooms.

In addition to being selected as the #1 hospital among those with fewer than 350 beds – Hackensack University Medical Center received the same recognition among bigger hospitals – Jersey City Medical Center was recognized first for stroke care, high-risk pregnancy and neurological disorders; second for treatment of pediatric cancers, congestive heart failure and coronary bypass; and third for prostate cancer. It also was named by physicians as one of the top 10 hospitals in every other category.

Scott, who came to LibertyHealth in 2008 as its top administrator, has placed an emphasis with physicians and staff on the four pillars – patient safety, clinical quality, patient satisfaction and economic health. Signs of the effectiveness of this focus have been evident in terms of a significant increase in patient census, the attraction of many highly trained physicians, and enhanced profitability.

"We are finding that many well-trained physicians from not only Hudson County but throughout northern New Jersey and

New York City are now looking to bring their patients to Jersey City Medical Center," said Dr. Kenneth Garay, the hospital's Chief Medical Officer. "During the past two years, over 130 physicians in primary care and various specialties have joined the staff."

The hospital has also added new centers of excellence, in such areas as stroke, epilepsy and prostate cancer (and, soon, GI), and coming soon are new additions to the campus, such as the Cristie Kerr Women's Health Center, which will open this spring, and a new inpatient rehabilitation center.

A state-designated trauma center and a major teaching affiliate of Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, Jersey City Medical Center has also been successful in changing its payer mix, making the hospital less and less dependent on the shrinking state charity care dollar.

Success at Jersey City Medical Center comes at the heels of a New Jersey Hospital Association finding that a number of hospitals in the state are "extremely vulnerable to closure" if next year's state budget includes significant funding cuts to hospitals.

"We're enormously proud of this recognition and the trust put in our hospital by physicians and patients," said Scott.

Last year the hospital was recognized for national nursing excellence with the Magnet Award. Jersey City Medical Center is the hospital in Hudson, Union and Essex to qualify.

To acknowledge the support of its employees and medical staff in attaining this recognition, the hospital will host a free luncheon celebration on Wednesday (from noon to 2 p.m.) for them. □