

News Release

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Kim Savage, 941-917-6271

Pager: 941-252-8101

Independent Study Ranks Sarasota Memorial Among Nation's Top Heart Hospitals

**Findings: Due to superior care, people treated at Top 100 Cardiac Hospitals
have shorter, less costly hospital stays and are less likely to die or experience complications**

SARASOTA (Oct. 31, 2005) – An independent study released today named Sarasota Memorial Health Care System as one of the Top 100 Cardiovascular Hospitals in the nation. The local hospital was spotlighted in today's *Modern Healthcare* magazine, along with results of an annual study by Evanston, Ill.-based Solucient that objectively measures the care heart patients receive in the nation's hospitals – for heart attacks and cardiac procedures such as bypass grafts and angioplasties – and identifies those demonstrating superior outcomes and performance on key criteria.

It is the fourth consecutive year that Sarasota Memorial has received Solucient's 100 Top Cardiac Hospital recognition. No other hospital in Manatee or Sarasota County made the nation's top list. Earlier this year, Sarasota Memorial also ranked #19th for cardiac care/cardiac surgery (and top 50 in six other specialties) in *U.S. News & World Report's* annual "Best Hospitals" study published in July.

"The consistency of consecutive annual awards is a testament to the caliber of physicians, nurses and staff caring for our patients, and to the hospital board's commitment to providing our community with the highest quality health care," said Sarasota Memorial Hospital CEO Gwen MacKenzie.

The Solucient 100 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals study reveals that top-performing facilities consistently outperform their peers, especially in terms of mortality and complication rates. In short, top hospitals had lower rates of death and complications, were able to send their patients home earlier and had average lower costs than comparable facilities. Among other findings, Solucient's study revealed:

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- If peer hospitals (non-winners) provided the same quality of care as the 100 Top Hospitals, survival rates would increase by more than 10,000 patients each year.
- Complications of care could also decrease in peer hospitals. More than 1,100 additional patients could be complication-free.
- Among top community hospitals, post-operative infection rates were an average 42 percent lower than infection rates in (non-winning) peer hospitals.

The 2005 winners included 30 teaching hospitals with cardiovascular residency programs; 40 teaching hospitals without cardiovascular residency programs; and 30 community hospitals (including Sarasota Memorial). For a list of the "Solucient 100 Top Hospitals: Cardiovascular Benchmarks for Success" winners and a summary of the report, visit <http://www.100TopHospitals.com>.

"By identifying hospitals that display superior performance in the clinical management of cardiovascular disease, we offer the healthcare industry a direction for positive change and information to help decrease the variations in quality and financial performance that continue to plague healthcare today," the study reports.

About Sarasota Memorial: Sarasota Memorial Health Care System is an 826-bed regional medical center, and the only Florida hospital that ranked in *U.S. News*' best 20 hospitals for cardiac care. The hospital performs more than 1,000 open heart surgeries each year. Besides its high ranking for heart care/heart surgery, Sarasota Memorial was named by *U.S. News* among the best hospitals in the country in six other specialties: orthopedics, cancer care, urology, geriatrics, digestive disorders and ear, nose and throat care. It also is the only hospital in a four-county region that has Magnet Nursing Services Recognition, the nation's highest honor for excellence in nursing. Statewide, Sarasota Memorial has the second largest cardiac program (volume of open heart surgeries) in Florida and offers the most advanced diagnostics in the region, including cardiac catheterization, intracoronary ultrasound, transesophageal echocardiography (TEE), cardiac CT angiography, stress testing, nuclear imaging, the latest MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and the area's only electrophysiology (EP) program. Non-surgical procedures include angioplasty and stenting, including drug-eluting stents, and brachytherapy for bypass grafts narrowed by plaque development. A cardiac rehabilitation program, and heart failure and anti-coagulation disease management clinics ensure heart patients have access to the full continuum of cardiac care.

"One of America's Best Hospitals"
 – *U.S. News & World Report*

