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News Release

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**Joint Township District Memorial Hospital Recognized as an
American Heart Association Start! Fit-Friendly Company**

*Start! helps companies take steps
to decrease healthcare expenses, increase productivity*

St. Mary's – The Joint Township District Memorial Hospital and the Grand Lake Health System have been recognized as a Gold-Level Start! Fit-Friendly Company by the American Heart Association's Start! movement for helping employees eat better and move more. The Grand Lake Health System has also been recognized by the American Heart Association for innovation in community wellness.

Grand Lake Health System was one of only 22 companies in the USA receiving the Community Fitness Innovation Award. The recognition was for the Grand Lake Health Challenge, a community weight loss program sponsored by Joint Township Hospital and local newspapers. The weight loss program, which also included wellness education and motivational sessions, had participation from 128 teams (512 participants) who lost almost 6,000 pounds in the six months of the Grand Health Challenge. Participants also noted that the program incited coworkers and family members to exercise more and to eat healthier.

“Physical activity and employee wellness are important priorities at JTDMH. We are honored and excited to be recognized by the American Heart Association's Start! movement as a Gold-Level Start! Fit-Friendly Company,” said Kevin Harlan, CEO and President. “We're committed to providing the best workplace environment possible. This will benefit our employees' health and produce even more positive results for our hospital. We are also pleased to be recognized for community wellness innovation.”

Gold-level employers:

- Offer employees physical activity options in the workplace
- Increase healthy eating options at the worksite

- Promote a wellness culture in the workplace
- Implement at least nine criteria outlined by the American Heart Association in the areas of physical activity, nutrition and culture

JTDMH created an employee walking program and provided discounted pedometers to all staff members. The hospital also has a cardiac workout facility, well lit indoor and outdoor walking paths and an employee discounted Weight Watchers program.

The Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program is a catalyst for positive change in the American workforce by helping companies make their employees' health and wellness a priority.

American employers face increasing healthcare expenses and health-related losses in productivity that cost an estimated \$225.8 billion a year. Many American adults spend most of their waking hours at sedentary jobs. Their lack of physical activity raises their risk for a host of medical problems, such as obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. Employers face \$12.7 billion in annual medical expenses due to obesity alone. Start! helps change corporate cultures by motivating employees to start walking, which has the lowest dropout rate of any physical activity.

Recognition is a critical component of the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program. Employers that join this program qualify for official recognition by the American Heart Association. They are listed on the program's national Web site, as well as recognized at all local Start! Heart Walk events. A special advertising section in the Oct. 27, 2008 issue of *Forbes* magazine included a complete list of the companies across the nation that have been designated as Fit-Friendly. Qualifying companies also have the right to use the program's annual recognition seal for internal communications and with external, recruitment-related communications.

Participating companies also get free access to program resources such as the free Start! Walking Program, materials to help promote company wellness programs to employees, internal newsletter templates and consultation on CPR/AED (automated external defibrillator) programs.

Start! also offers MyStart! Online, a free Web-based fitness and nutrition tracker for companies and individuals. A "dashboard" feature lets HR or wellness managers view employee participation in Start!

"The Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program offers a unique, easy-to-implement opportunity for corporations to increase employees' physical activity, which will help improve their health – and their employers' bottom line," said Kelli Dixon, executive director of the American Heart Association, Miami Valley Division, "Even people who haven't exercised regularly until middle age can reap significant benefits by starting a walking program. A study published in 1986 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that individuals could gain two hours of life expectancy for every hour of regular, vigorous exercise they performed.^{1b}"

Start! is sponsored nationally by SUBWAY® Restaurants, Healthy Choice® and AstraZeneca. For more information about the Start! Fit-Friendly Companies Program and how it is helping to improve the health of Americans by focusing on an activity that is convenient, free and easy, call 937-853-3101 or visit heart.org/start.

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About the American Heart Association

Founded in 1924, the American Heart Association today is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of heart diseases and stroke. These diseases, America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers, and all other cardiovascular diseases, claim nearly 870,000 lives a year. In fiscal year 2006–07 the association invested more than \$554 million in research, professional and public education, advocacy and community service programs to help all Americans live longer, healthier lives. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit americanheart.org.

About Joint Township District Memorial Hospital and the Grand Lake Health System

Proudly committed to serving the community with compassionate care, advanced technology and expertise, Grand Lake Health System is a comprehensive health system offering a wide range of primary, acute and therapy services to the people of the Grand Lake region. Joint Township District Memorial Hospital offers modern facilities, state-of-the-art equipment, caring medical professionals and highly qualified, experienced physicians, the widest array of medical services and specialties with quality and convenience. We assure you that, even as we change and grow, we remain committed to our long tradition of serving you with skill, expertise, quality, care and compassion.

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