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WEST VIRGINIA HOSPITALS – INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

CHARLESTON, WV - West Virginia hospitals strive to improve the lives of the communities they serve. The dedicated caregivers are an integral part of a healthier and more productive population. They provide treatment for the sick or injured and help welcome new lives into the world.

That is the message of National Hospital Week, celebrated in West Virginia May 8-14 with the theme *Health Care from the Heart*.

The week is sponsored by the American Hospital Association (AHA) and recognized locally by West Virginia hospitals with public activities and events such as health fairs. National Hospital Week was launched in 1921 and, over the decades has helped revolutionize the public view of hospitals.

National Hospital Week coincides with the release of the recent Community Benefits Report by the West Virginia Hospital Association (WVHA) *West Virginia Hospitals – The Heart of a Healthier West Virginia*. This report, also available online at www.wvha.org, highlights the contributions hospitals provide to their communities as well as the programs and services designed to save and improve the lives of West Virginians.

“With more than 46,000 healthcare professionals, West Virginia’s hospitals are dedicated to serving the needs of their communities, even beyond traditional healthcare.” said Joe Letnaunchyn, President and CEO of WVHA. With each health service, screening, education program and each dollar invested to help those in need, hospitals day in and day out work to advance the health of the communities they serve. Financial results can never adequately explain how people’s lives are touched, changed and saved by services hospitals offer for free or significantly below cost.”

The current data available shows the significant benefits and services West Virginia Hospitals provide. The community benefits alone exceed \$1.3 billion annually.

This figure includes:

- \$182 million in uncompensated care (\$55 million in charity care and \$127 million in bad debt costs);
- \$126 million in provider taxes to help fund the Medicaid program;
- \$148 million in Medical Education; and
- \$878 million in government program shortfalls (\$523 in Medicare shortfalls and \$355 million in state payer losses)

The *Report* highlights the community benefits that are provided to West Virginians and the importance of hospitals to the local economy. More than 46,000 people are employed by West Virginia hospitals which help contribute \$9.3 billion to the local economy every year (including calculations for compensation, facilities, spin-off jobs, hospital and employee purchasing, and other parameters).

The WVHA, an association for hospitals and health systems, is a not-for-profit statewide organization representing 66 acute and specialty hospitals and health systems across the continuum of care. The WVHA supports its members in achieving a strong, healthy West Virginia by providing leadership in healthcare advocacy, education, information and technical assistance, and by being a catalyst for effective change through collaboration, consensus building, and a focus on desired outcomes.

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