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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**National Study Finds Firelands Regional Medical Center
Number One in Ohio for Vascular Surgery**

Firelands Regional Medical Center in Top 5% in the Nation

(October 20, 2010 – Sandusky, Ohio) – HealthGrades, the leading independent healthcare ratings organization, published a study today finding that Firelands Regional Medical Center is number one in the State of Ohio and among the top 5% in the nation for vascular surgery. Ratings included the nation’s nearly 5,000 hospitals and examined mortality rates and complication rates from government quality data reported in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

“Firelands Regional Medical Center recognizes that healthcare consumers are becoming more interested in and educated about quality outcomes,” says Patty Martin, Vice President of Quality & Patient Satisfaction at Firelands Regional Medical Center. “We are pleased to share that Firelands Regional Medical Center ranks best in the state for vascular surgery.” Specifically, Firelands Regional Medical Center received the following HealthGrades 2011 vascular awards, ratings, and rankings:

- Ranked #1 in State for Vascular Surgery in 2011 (ranked #3 in 2010)
- Ranked in the Top 5% in the Nation for Vascular Surgery (ranked Top 10% in 2010)
- Five-Star Rated for Vascular Surgery in 2011
- Five-Star Rated for Carotid Surgery For 7 Years in a Row (2005-2011)
- Five-Star Rated for Peripheral Vascular Bypass in 2011

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Dowzell M. Swayngim, MD, shares his excitement with the HealthGrades ranking, “We have been ranked as one of the top facilities for vascular surgery in the state by HealthGrades on numerous occasions. What this tells the people in the community is that we provide the highest quality of care when it comes to vascular surgery. This ranking is a direct reflection of the caliber of surgical expertise that is offered at Firelands Regional Medical Center.”

Dowzell M. Swayngim, MD, Jeffrey L. Buehrer, MD, and David H. Kim, DO are dedicated exclusively to the practice of Vascular Surgery at Firelands Regional Medical Center with over 45 years of combined experience in vascular surgery. The vascular surgeons offer a full breadth of minimally invasive and surgical treatments for:

- Peripheral Artery Disease
- Leg Pain/Swelling Caused by Bad Circulation
- Varicose Veins and Chronic Venous Insufficiencies
- Treatment of Deep Vein Thrombosis
- Carotid Artery Disease
- Aneurysms
- Dialysis Access Procedures
- Chemotherapy Access Procedures

“This ranking reflects the experience, outcomes and dedication of Drs. Swayngim, Buehrer and Kim, Vascular Surgeons on our Medical Staff, as well as the excellence of our entire Vascular Surgery team,” says Chuck Stark, President & CEO of Firelands Regional Medical Center. “Previously ranked number three in the state, this number one ranking speaks volumes for the quality of care that patients receive from our vascular surgeons and the rest of the care team. Patients do not need to leave town to receive their care from the best vascular surgeons in the State of Ohio and one of top 29 facilities in vascular surgery in the nation.”

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“Vascular surgery is a team effort, and we greatly appreciate all of the nurses, physicians, technicians and other health providers who helped make this outstanding accomplishment possible,” noted Dr. Buehrer. “It’s all about quality care, and making certain our patients receive the very best vascular care possible; this is our ongoing goal. We join all of the members of the vascular surgical team at Firelands Regional Medical Center in taking great pride over this outstanding HealthGrades quality achievement.”

The *Thirteenth Annual HealthGrades Hospital Quality in America* study, the largest annual report of its kind, analyzed patient outcomes from nearly 40 million Medicare hospitalization records over a three-year period.

HealthGrades’ hospital ratings are the leading objective, actionable quality measures based solely on clinical performance, and are available to the general public by visiting www.healthgrades.com.

HealthGrades rankings are significant for patients to consider because top-performing hospitals (as ranked by HealthGrades) had dramatically lower mortality rates than other hospitals, according to the study. For the 17 procedures and diagnoses for which HealthGrades analyzed mortality rates, patients at top hospitals had a 72% lower chance of dying when compared with the lowest-performing hospitals, and a 53% lower chance of dying when compared to the U.S. national average.

HealthGrades Hospital Quality Ratings

HealthGrades rates hospitals independently based on data that hospitals submit to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. No hospital can opt in or out of being rated, and no hospital pays to be rated.

For 26 procedures and medical treatments, HealthGrades issues star ratings that reflect the mortality and complication rates for each category of care. Hospitals receiving a 5-star rating have mortality or complication rates that are below the national average, to a statistically significant degree. A 3-star rating means the hospital performs as expected. One-star ratings indicate the hospital's mortality or complication rates in that procedure or treatment are statistically higher than average. Because the risk profiles of patient populations at hospitals are not alike, HealthGrades risk-adjusts the data to allow for equal comparisons.

More information on today's HealthGrades study, including the complete methodology, can be found at www.healthgrades.com.

About Firelands Regional Medical Center

Firelands Regional Medical Center is nationally recognized for its award-winning care. As a 400-bed facility, Firelands is ranked number one in the State of Ohio and in the Top 5% nationally for Vascular Surgery, Top 10% Nationally in Acute Inpatient Rehabilitation, a Thomson Top 100 Hospital for its Cardiovascular Services, and ranked in the Top 5% nationally for Patient Safety. Firelands Regional Medical Center is the area's only Accredited Chest Pain Center, is a Certified Primary Stroke Center, is the area's only Breast Imaging Center of Excellence. Serving a five-county region, Firelands provides many advanced care services to the region including comprehensive cancer care, full-time interventional cardiac care and open heart surgery, wound care services including hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), acute inpatient rehabilitation, as well as many advanced surgical procedures. For more information about Firelands, visit our website at firelands.com or visit us on Facebook at facebook.com/FirelandsRegionalMedicalCenter.

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