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For Immediate Release

ST. VINCENT'S RANKED # 1 IN CT FOR CARDIAC SURGERY

BRIDGEPORT, CT October 26, 2009 – St. Vincent's has been ranked #1 in Connecticut for cardiac surgery, according to the 2010 rankings of *HealthGrades*, the leading independent ranking source in the nation.

Ranked among the top 10 percent in the nation for cardiac surgery for three years in a row, St. Vincent's has also been five-star rated for coronary bypass surgery for four years in a row, and five-star rated for treatment of heart attack for eight years in a row, according to *HealthGrades'* comprehensive study. The 2010 ratings, issued on October 13, 2009, represent data from the years 2006 through 2008, the most current information available.

St. Vincent's President/CEO Susan L. Davis, RN, EdD, said the *HealthGrades* ranking "represents yet another milestone in St. Vincent's long history of setting the standard for cardiac care in the state and even the country. The designation is a tribute to our team of outstanding cardiac surgeons, cardiologists and department staff members who are dedicated to saving lives through advanced prevention, diagnostics and therapeutics."

"We are able to achieve this designation because our cardiologists and cardiac surgeons are highly skilled, and are using the most advanced minimally invasive techniques," said Interim Chairman of Cardiovascular Medicine and Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery Rafael Squitieri, MD. "Assisted by a superbly trained staff and the latest in cutting-edge medical equipment, we are now able to help so many patients, even those in their 90s or those previously considered too sick for surgery."

The 2010 *HealthGrades* ratings for all hospitals nationwide are available, free of charge, on HealthGrades' consumer website, located at www.healthgrades.com

St. Vincent's Cardiac Surgery Program

Recognized over the years for its role in the development of emergency angioplasty for heart attack treatment, St. Vincent's is now at the vanguard of the minimally invasive surgical approach to treatment of cardiothoracic disease. Minimally invasive techniques are used to perform endoscopic vein harvesting for coronary artery disease (making small incisions to take veins from the leg to create a bypass around the diseased arteries), to correct atrial fibrillation, and to *repair* the mitral valve, a delicate procedure that offers longer, even life-long effectiveness and is safer than the traditional valve replacement.

"With minimally invasive techniques, patients do better because there is much less blood loss and shorter recovery times," said Albert DiMeo, MD, medical director of minimally invasive cardiothoracic surgery..

Improving Heart Attack Survival

Also helping St. Vincent's to achieve this designation is the acquisition of the newest diagnostic technology and medical devices, noted Dr. Squitieri. "For instance, the innovative Ventricular Assist Device (VAD), currently in use at St. Vincent's, allows the heart to rest after a heart attack, helping to ensure that any surgery necessary to correct underlying problems will be more successful. In addition, the coordination between the emergency department and cardiology teams allows us to care for patients suffering from a heart attack rapidly and efficiently, improving chances of survival."

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About HealthGrades Ranking System:

HealthGrades independently and objectively rates the quality of care for nearly every hospital in the country, for each of twenty-eight procedures and diagnoses ranging from bypass surgery to knee replacement to treatment of heart attack. The analysis is “risk-adjusted,” meaning that hospitals taking sicker patients can be compared on equal footing with other hospitals.

The star ratings are based on an analysis of approximately 40 million patient records over a three-year period that hospitals themselves submit to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as well as state governments, and from publicly available directories and telephone surveys.

HealthGrades (Nasdaq:HGRD) is the leading healthcare ratings organization, company, providing quality ratings and profiles of hospitals, nursing homes and physicians to consumers, corporations, health plans and hospitals. *HealthGrades* has been a recognized and trusted brand for more than 10 years, and more than 8 million individuals research healthcare providers on HealthGrades .com each month. For more information, please visit www.healthgrades.com.

About St. Vincent's

St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, CT is a 473-bed community teaching and referral hospital with a Level II trauma center and a 76-bed inpatient psychiatric facility in Westport. St. Vincent's provides a full range of inpatient and outpatient services with regional centers of excellence in cardiology, surgery, cancer care, orthopedics, diagnostics, women's and family services, behavioral health, senior health and an array of specialized services.

St. Vincent's Medical Center is a subsidiary of St. Vincent's Health Services, which include St. Vincent's Behavioral Health Services, Westport Campus, Hall-Brooke Behavioral Health Services, St. Vincent's College, St. Vincent's Special Needs Services, St. Vincent's Medical Center Foundation and St. Vincent's Immediate Health Care Centers. It is a member of Ascension Health, the nation's largest Catholic healthcare system. St. Vincent's is a teaching affiliate of the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and of New York Medical College. The Medical Center is also sponsor of Swim Across the Sound, one of the nation's largest hospital-based cancer prevention and patient support programs. For referral to a St. Vincent's physician or more information on programs and services, call the toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS (7847) or visit www.stvincents.org