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## **First Patient Admitted to Griffin Hospital 100 years Ago**

Derby, CT, December 3, 2009 – On December 9<sup>th</sup>, one hundred years ago, Raphael Colonna, an Ansonia brass worker became the first patient admitted to the new 24-bed Griffin Hospital.

Griffin's history actually began in 1901 when a group of community leaders received a charter to incorporate "The Derby Hospital". The group led by the hospital's first President Charles Clark soon began a fund raising effort to build the new hospital. Later that year George Griffin, a wealthy industrialist whose Shelton factory was the world's largest manufacturer of horn buttons, passed away bequeathing securities and a share in a trading schooner valued at \$50, 583 to build the new hospital.

The land on which the hospital was built was purchased in 1905 for \$9,900 with proceeds from George Griffin's estate. The groundbreaking was held in 1908 with the balance of the estate funding the construction and equipping of the hospital. The original trustees were so impressed with George Griffin's generosity that they changed the name of the facility from "The Derby Hospital" to Griffin Hospital in his honor.

Over the last hundred years, Griffin Hospital has remained true to the mission envisioned for it by its founders of providing care and services to meet the health care needs of members of the community it serves. But it is during time of disaster that Griffin has shined and proven its commitment to ensuring the health and well being of the community. Those disasters include major trolley accidents in 1917 and 1921 resulting in deaths and serious injuries; response to the great flu epidemic of 1918 that resulted in more than 400,000 deaths nationwide and a massive immunization of 19,000 residents to avoid an outbreak of typhoid after the historic flood of 1955. Heralded more recently was Griffin's handling of the Otilie Lundgren inhalation anthrax case in 2001 .

Griffin had its brush with celebrity in August 1956 when popular newspaper columnist and host of the country's favorite Sunday evening variety show Ed Sullivan and three others including his son-in-law were rushed to Griffin Hospital after a car accident on an isolated stretch of the old Route 8 in Seymour. Sullivan was traveling from his farm in Southbury. Sullivan praised the hospital and his care in his newspaper column after a week's stay at Griffin.

The hospital, now with 160 beds, over 7,600 admissions and 38,000 E.R. visits annually and 1,350 employees, continues, as George Griffin envisioned, meeting the health care needs of

residents of the community served by providing quality clinical services and creating an exceptional healthcare experience for those it serves. What George Griffin and the hospital's founders didn't envision was that a hundred years later, as Griffin celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it would be recognized internationally for its innovative programs, Planetree patient-centered approach to care, its unique healing environment and as a model for hospitals around the world.

Griffin has been home to the Planetree organization since 1998 when it moved from San Francisco to Derby. The original pioneer of patient-centered care, Planetree has been personalizing, humanizing and demystifying health care for patients and their families for more than 30 years. Griffin Hospital, a flagship Planetree hospital, has come to be recognized internationally for its award-winning patient care facility, clinical performance and patient satisfaction ratings.

Two editions of "Putting Patients First" edited by Griffin President Patrick Charmel and Planetree President Susan Frampton have been published with the first edition named the health care book of the year in 2004 by the American College of Healthcare Executives. The Patient-Centered Care Improvement Guide developed in partnership with the Picker Institute last year has been downloaded more than 25,000 times from the Planetree and Picker web sites.

In addition to Griffin, Planetree member hospitals include Cleveland Clinic, New York Presbyterian Health System, Loma Linda University Hospital, international hospitals in Canada, the Netherlands, Japan and Brazil, and here in Connecticut, Stamford Hospital, Danbury Hospital and New Milford Hospital.

George Griffin and Griffin Hospital's founders would be proud to know that the hospital they helped establish has become an industry leader influencing the way care is delivered at hospitals not only in the United States, but worldwide.

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