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For Immediate Release

ST. VINCENT'S RANKS IN TOP 5% NATIONALLY FOR GI SURGERY

BRIDGEPORT, CT, November, 2009 -- St. Vincent's Medical Center ranks in the top 5% in the nation for gastrointestinal surgery according to the 2010 rankings of *HealthGrades*., the leading independent ranking source in the nation. The ranking was released in October as part of a comprehensive study performed annually by *HealthGrades*, which assesses patient outcomes – mortality and complication rates – at virtually all of the nation's nearly 5,000 non-federal hospitals.

Because of this achievement, St. Vincent's is the recipient of the *HealthGrades* Gastrointestinal Surgery Excellence Award™. St. Vincent's received the following ratings in support of its quality award:

- Five –Star rated for GI Surgery three years in a row (2008-2010)
- Five –Star rated for Cholecystectomy (gallbladder removal) four years in a row (2007-2010)

According to Chairman of Surgery Douglas Ross, MD, FACS, "Quality achievement has been attained through the establishment of a multidisciplinary GI committee, along with providing state of the art operating rooms and equipment. These factors along with the careful expertise of the surgeons, combined with meaningful peer review leads to better patient outcomes and satisfaction which is the ultimate goal."

St. Vincent's has also enhanced its perio-operative care by instituting the World Health Organization (WHO) checklist at the time of surgery, which leads to safer surgery.. Chief of General Surgery Richard Lovanio, MD, said, "Due to the development of new surgical techniques and the introduction of the latest diagnostic technology, such as MRI and interventional radiology, we are able to treat patients who present with very challenging problems, and help them significantly."

St. Vincent's has also set new standards in surgical care with its state-of-the-art 27,000 square foot Operating Suite, including 10 operating rooms and a 12-bed post-anesthesia unit (PACU). In 2009, a new \$10.5 million, 13,500 square foot Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) opened, housing four operating rooms, a 12-bed recovery suite, a cystoscopy room and an expanded procedure room for minimally invasive procedures. In addition to incorporating the latest technology and design standards, both the main OR and the ASC feature a tracking system that improves communications between staff and family members, part of St. Vincent's patient and family-centered approach to care.

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

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 Hospital

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 annually by *HealthGrades*, which assesses patient outcomes – mortality and complication rates – at virtually all of the nation’s nearly 5,000 non-federal hospitals.

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