

March 13, 2007

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Acceptance Speech Richard A. Norling, President and CEO, Premier

Mr. Vice President, Secretary Gutierrez, thank you for the opportunity to address this distinguished gathering. I would like to extend our congratulations to Mesa Products and North Mississippi Medical Center on their tremendous accomplishment.

To all those in attendance - thank you for being such an important part of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Because of you, this award has never been more vital and influential, both here and abroad.

To Premier's staff, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart for the work you do every day, for embodying our values and believing in our audacious goal. I could not be more proud of a group of people than I am of you today.

It is my great honor to speak on behalf of the not-for-profit hospitals and health systems that own the Premier alliance. They are represented here by members of our Board of Directors.

More than a decade ago, these not-for-profit hospitals had a vision: to create an alliance to improve healthcare quality while safely reducing costs.

They persisted in that vision through many years and many challenges. They invested in shared resources to make that vision a reality – building the nation's largest purchasing network and the largest repository of hospital comparative data. And they pushed us hard to strive for excellence in our operations on their behalf.

Today, 1,700 not-for-profit hospitals – *and the patients they serve* - are the beneficiaries of that vision.

Together we have achieved remarkable results that have improved the health of communities across America.

Together we have achieved billions of dollars in savings - savings that strengthen the ability of hospitals to provide quality care.

Together we have identified best practices that reduce birth-related injuries for mothers and newborn babies.

Together we have led an initiative that has been a model for ethical business practices and transparency within the healthcare industry.

And together we have partnered with Medicare to test a new healthcare payment model that rewards high-quality care. Our pay-for-performance demonstration project has proven that high quality healthcare can cost less. It is a model for the entire nation.

Today marks a wonderful milestone on our journey. But our ultimate goal is to transform American healthcare - to make it the safest, most efficient and effective healthcare system in the world. It is that goal that pulls us forward. And it is that goal this award truly celebrates.

Thank you again Mr. Vice President, Secretary Gutierrez. It is an honor to accept the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award on behalf of the Premier healthcare alliance.