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For Immediate Release

Society of Thoracic Surgeons Ranks Stormont-Vail Health*Care* Cardiac Surgery Program Among Nation's Top 10 percent for Third Consecutive Time

(Topeka, Kan., Nov. 16, 2009) – Stormont-Vail Health*Care* and its Adult Cardiac Surgery Program has recently been awarded the highest designation of three-stars for its cardiac surgical program. This is the third consecutive time this program and its clinicians have received this designation. The top tier, three-star rating for adult cardiac surgery is awarded by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) to hospitals across the country that meet the data driven rating system that the STS has developed. All aspects of quality care within the adult cardiac surgical program were measured, including:

- Patient outcomes
- Compliance with recommended medical practices
- Prompt delivery of time-critical treatment
- Staff performance

Approximately 10 percent of adult cardiac surgery programs receive the 3-star rating, which denotes the highest category of quality. The current analysis of national data covers the period of time from July 2008 through June 2009.

"This rating reflects the commitment to the outstanding quality care that Cotton-O'Neil Clinic cardiothoracic and vascular surgeons, Shanti Gandhi, M.D., FACS, FRCS–C, David Lutes, M.D. and Peter Tutuska, M.D., FACS and the entire cardiac surgical care staff have continuously demanded from themselves in an effort to benefit the patients they serve," said Kent Palmberg, M.D., senior vice president and chief medical officer, Stormont-Vail Health*Care*.

"This three-star rating is further evidence that patients who undergo cardiac surgery at Stormont-Vail are receiving outstanding clinical care, which rivals the best

programs in the United States," said Joseph Hopeck, administrative director, cardiovascular service line at Stormont-Vail Health*Care*. "This superior rating is highly regarded by medical professionals to be the gold standard by which entire cardiac surgery programs are rated," added Hopeck.

To learn more about the top tier cardiac surgery program at Stormont-Vail Health*Care*, please contact Nancy Burkhardt, director of marketing, Stormont-Vail Health*Care*, at (785) 575-5493.

About Cotton-O'Neil Clinic

Cotton-O'Neil Clinic is the largest multi-specialty physician group in Topeka, Kan. There are currently more than 195 physicians affiliated with Cotton-O'Neil Clinic, Pediatric*Care,* Medical Arts Clinic and the additional regional clinics that reach out to communities surrounding Topeka. As a group, they make up the Medical Services Division of Stormont-Vail Health*Care*, and function as an integrated health care delivery system. Medical Arts Clinic joined Cotton-O'Neil Clinic in 1994. Cotton-O'Neil Clinic merged with Stormont-Vail Health*Care*, a Joint Commission-approved, and non-profit organization in 1995. Together, they care for patients throughout northeast Kansas.

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