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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PALM DRIVE CERTIFIED AS PRIMARY STROKE CENTER

Sebastopol—A national evaluation team certified Palm Drive Hospital as a Primary Stroke Center on Thursday making it one of only two hospitals in Sonoma County to meet stringent national standards for fast, effective treatment of stroke patients.

“This means the high quality of our stroke care has been certified by a national organization, something no other small hospital in Sonoma County has achieved. Even in Santa Rosa, the only hospital with national certification is Kaiser,” said Allan Bernstein, M.D., medical director of Palm Drive’s Primary Stroke Center.

Certification means Palm Drive has exceeded the standards set by the American Stroke Association and the American Heart Association for treatment of stroke patients. Palm Drive’s medical personnel have received advanced training in stroke; clot-busting drugs and neurologists are accessible 24/7; and a stroke patient can be examined, diagnosed and begin treatment within one hour of arriving at the emergency room. The standard is three hours.

Many hospitals offer stroke programs of varying kinds, but only two hospitals in Sonoma County have met the national standards for certification as a Primary Stroke Center: Palm Drive Hospital in Sebastopol and Kaiser Permanente in Santa Rosa.

“The reason this certification is so critical and important is because we now know that time – the time between when one has a stroke and when care commences -- is absolutely critical to a person’s ability to recover from stroke,” said Nancy Dobbs, president of the hospital’s Board of Directors. “The board applauds the hard work of staff in putting together this vital program.”

Certification as a Primary Stroke Center by the American Osteopathic Association guarantees patients the best possible care, not only in emergency services, but in preventing secondary complications common to stroke and with post-stroke rehabilitation and education.

“Someone who’s had a stroke needs to go to a hospital that has all the framework in place to get them the drugs they need or the surgeon they need within a very short, specified

time frame. To get this accreditation, we had to prove we can do that time and time and time again,” said Karen Cauthen, Palm Drive’s chief nursing officer.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. and the leading cause of serious, long-term disability. Most strokes are caused by blood clots that shut off the supply of blood to areas of the brain. Without blood, brain cells begin to die. Clot-busting drugs, which can save lives and prevent life-long disabilities, are not effective unless they are administered within three hours of the first stroke symptoms.

Palm Drive Hospital is the only facility in West Sonoma County with a fully staffed emergency room open 24/7. The 37-bed hospital is owned and operated by the Palm Drive Health Care District, and governed by a publicly elected, 5-member Board of Directors. It has annual revenues of about \$30 million.

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