

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AAAHC Deemed Accrediting Organization for State of New York
*Office-Based Surgery Facilities to be Accredited Before July 2009***

Skokie, Ill.—Jan. 9, 2008— New York Commissioner Richard F. Daines has announced that the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (Accreditation Association/AAAHC) is a designated accrediting organization for office-based surgery practice accreditation.

In July 2007, the State of New York passed a law (New York State Public Health Law Sec. 230-d) mandating all office-based surgery practices* to obtain and maintain full accredited status with a nationally recognized accrediting agency, as determined by the New York State Commissioner of Health. After July 14, 2009, surgery in a non-accredited office-based practice will be prohibited, and will constitute professional misconduct by the physician. The physician could lose his or her license. In addition, beginning Jan. 14, 2008, all “adverse events” occurring in these offices must be reported to the state Department of Health according to the new law.*

“Accreditation is a voluntary process that enables an organization to measure the quality of its services and performance against nationally recognized standards,” said John Burke, Ph.D., AAAHC Executive Director and CEO. “New York has now joined the ranks of states in mandating accreditation for these practices, which not only are growing in number but adding more and more sophisticated medical procedures that used to be done only in hospitals. It is important that New York is taking this step to ensure quality and protect the public.”

AAAHC is a private, not-for-profit organization formed in 1979 and the only accrediting organization that focuses solely on ambulatory health care organizations. The Accreditation Association has accredited more than 3,600 ambulatory health care organizations, more than any other accrediting body. AAAHC’s survey model is peer-based. Surveyors are experienced physicians, registered nurses, and administrators allowing for a collaborative and consultative approach that is flexible and adaptable to the specific needs of each organization.

Through Jan. 31, 2008, New York facilities can obtain a free CD containing the *AAAHC Guidebook for Office-Based Surgery*. The guidebook (a \$135 value) is a useful tool to help

prepare for the accreditation survey. More information on AAAHC and accreditation for New York office-based surgery facilities can be found at www.aaahcnewyork.org.

***Definitions of terms used in New York State Public Health Law Sec. 230-d:**

Office-based surgery - a surgical or invasive procedure requiring general anesthesia, moderate or deep sedation, and certain liposuction procedures performed in a location other than a hospital. It excludes minor procedures, including those requiring “minimal sedation” and procedures with local or topical anesthesia. The law applies to physicians and physician assistants (PAs). Dentists and podiatrists are not subject to the law.

Minor procedures - (i) procedures that can be performed safely with a minimum of discomfort where the likelihood of complications requiring hospitalization is minimal; (ii) procedures performed with local or topical anesthesia; or (iii) liposuction with removal of less than 500 cc of fat under unsupplemented local anesthesia.

Minimal sedation - a drug-induced state during which (i) patients respond normally to verbal commands; (ii) cognitive function and coordination may be impaired; and (iii) ventilatory and cardiovascular functions are unaffected.

Adverse events - (i) patient death within thirty days; (ii) unplanned transfer to a hospital; (iii) unscheduled hospital admission within seventy-two hours of the office-based surgery, for longer than twenty-four hours; or (iv) any other serious or life-threatening event. Adverse events must be reported to the Department of Health’s Patient Safety Center (PSC) within one-business day of the occurrence.

The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC/Accreditation

Association), founded in 1979, is the leader in ambulatory health care accreditation with more than 3,600 organizations accredited nationwide. The AAAHC accredits a variety of ambulatory health care organizations, including ambulatory surgery centers, office-based surgery centers, endoscopy centers, college student health centers, and large medical and dental practices. The Accreditation Association serves as an advocate for the provision of high quality health care through the development of nationally recognized standards and through its survey and accreditation programs. AAAHC accreditation is recognized as a symbol of quality by third-party payers, medical organizations, liability insurance companies, state and federal agencies and the public. For more information, visit www.aaahc.org.

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