

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AAAHC Reminds New York OBS Facilities of Approaching One Year Deadline
Office-Based Surgery Facilities to be Accredited Before July 2009

Skokie, Ill.—July 8, 2008— With just a year to go before all office-based surgery facilities in the State of New York must be accredited to maintain their practice and keep their doors open, only a small percentage have applied to begin the process. The process from application and preparation through the survey and accreditation can take six months or more, according to officials at the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (Accreditation Association/AAAHC), a designated accrediting body for office-based surgery practices in the State of New York.

In July 2007, the State of New York passed a law mandating that all doctors performing office-based surgery requiring certain levels of anesthesia or sedation have their offices reviewed and accredited by July 14, 2009, or face penalties from the state medical board. New York is one of 26 states that now require accreditation for all ambulatory, office-based surgery centers.

To meet the high demand of the hundreds of office-based surgery facilities in New York that need to be surveyed and accredited in order to comply with the legislation, AAAHC is partnering with the New York Department of Health to urge those facilities not yet accredited to take action today.

The AAAHC survey and accreditation process requires several months to complete, so facilities in need of compliance should take steps immediately in order to meet the July 14, 2009 deadline. “With only one year left to complete the accreditation process, the New York Department of Health advises all office-based surgery facilities to contact one of the designated accrediting organizations as soon as possible to comply with the law in a timely manner and avoid penalty,” said John Morley, M.D., Medical Director of the Department’s Office of Health Systems Management.

In July 2007, the State of New York passed a law (New York State Public Health Law Sec. 230-d) mandating that all office-based surgery practices* 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, as of 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 allows an organization to set itself apart and be nationally recognized for quality care and service,” said John Burke, Ph. D., AAAHC Executive Director and CEO. “New York is the most recent state to mandate accreditation, highlighting the importance of the need for quality standards of patient care in office-based surgery settings.”

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 3,700 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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