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**Central Ohio's Not-for-Profit Hospital Systems  
Deliver Nearly \$400 Million in Community Benefit in 2008**

*Hospitals warn of external factors, trends that pose a threat to future benefits*

**[Columbus, OH]:** Columbus's four not-for-profit hospital systems provided nearly \$400 million in Community Benefit to the citizens of central Ohio in 2008, including \$175 million in charity care.

That's the bottom-line message contained in the "Connected to the Community" report released jointly today by Mount Carmel Health System, Nationwide Children's Hospital, OhioHealth and The Ohio State University Medical Center. This report marks the first time the four systems have collaborated to publish their Community Benefit numbers in the aggregate.

This good news is tempered, however, by the "sobering reality" that a number of external factors and unsustainable trends put future benefits at risk. For example:

- Demand for charity care in central Ohio, which totaled \$175 million in 2008, has risen 163 percent since 2004.
- Government reimbursement to hospitals for public health programs such as Medicaid continues to decline.
- The number of for-profit health facilities that siphon away profitable services that not-for-profit hospitals use to pay for essential but not-always-profitable community health services such as emergency or trauma care continues to increase.

"The almost \$400 million in Community Benefit is a tangible measure of the deep commitment central Ohio's not-for-profit hospital systems have made to improving community health," says Jeff Klingler, president and CEO of the Central Ohio Hospital Council. "Each and every component of Community Benefit, from charity care to community outreach to research and medical education, is critically important to some group or groups of central Ohioans – and to the overall health of our community."

“Our local network of not-for-profit hospitals is one of central Ohio’s greatest assets, and a number of external factors and unsustainable trends are putting the Community Benefit those hospitals provide at risk,” Klingler adds. “That’s one reason Columbus’s hospital system leaders are working as part of Community Healthcare Task Force convened by The Columbus Partnership to evaluate threats to healthcare delivery in our community and to develop ideas for preserving a system that has served central Ohio well for decades.”

To put the nearly \$400 million in Community Benefit in context, Klingler notes that United Way of Central Ohio, one of the outstanding United Way campaigns in the country, raised \$52 million in 2008. The amount of Community Benefit provided by central Ohio’s four not-for-profit hospital systems in 2008 is nearly eight times that figure.

The categories comprising Community Benefit follow nationally accepted reporting guidelines that have been adopted by the Internal Revenue Service as the national standard for reporting charitable activities by healthcare organizations. Major categories of Community Benefit include the following:

- Charity care (free care, based on cost of care, for those individuals without insurance or the ability to pay their hospital bills)
- Medicaid shortfall (the gap left when government reimbursement is less than hospitals’ cost to provide services to Medicaid patients)
- Community outreach/health improvement activities
- Subsidized health services (essential but unprofitable health services)
- Health professions education
- Research
- In-kind and cash donations to community groups and organizations

The “Connected to the Community” report can be viewed and downloaded at [www.centralohiohospitals.org](http://www.centralohiohospitals.org).

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