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NORTH OTTAWA COMMUNITY HEALTH SYSTEM ADDS NEW SERVICE TO CONTINUUM OF CARE
Orthotist to Meet Needs of Tri-Cities Growing Active & Aging Population

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2009 -- Grand Haven, Mich. – North Ottawa Community Health System (NOCHS) today announced an expansion of its continuum of care to include a growing field of expertise – orthotics and prosthetics. Gerald (Jerry) Lunsford, CO, Certified Orthotist, joined NOCHS staff in early October and is leading the system’s newly established service line called, North Ottawa Orthotics and Prosthetics.

Lunsford brings 17 years of clinical experience to NOCHS and previously led the highly successful orthotics and prosthetics program for a hospital in Muskegon for the past five years.

Orthotics and prosthetics is the evaluation, fabrication and custom fitting of artificial limbs and orthopedic braces. In short, orthotic braces support the body where function has been lost and prosthetics replace parts of the body that have been lost. The goal of the profession is to find ways to restore patient independence.

“The Tri-Cites area population has a significant number of aging residents – nearly 50 percent are aged 45 or older. That number grows every year,” said Lunsford. “But, really, no matter what your age, people in our community are active. The abundance of natural resources allows us to be adventurous and, sometimes, that brings about injury or trauma. The bottom line is … we’re active and many of us are getting older. Together, that’s creating a significant need for orthotic and prosthetic services in this area.”

“Jerry Lunsford is an excellent addition to our staff,” Shelleye Yaklin, NOCHS President and CEO. “He brings a wealth of experience and rounds out NOCHS’ ability to provide a complete continuum of care for patients facing motion and mobility challenges. Working with our growing orthopedic surgery and rehabilitative practices, North Ottawa Orthotics and Prosthetics provides patients with all options, in one location, right where it’s needed most -- close to home.”

For more information about North Ottawa Orthotics and Prosthetics, visit www.noch.org.

North Ottawa Community Health System includes an 81-bed hospital, 84-bed long-term care facility, home health-care and durable medical equipment services, retail pharmacy and urgent care center as well as physician practices in primary care and OB/GYN. It also includes North Ottawa County’s first in-patient Hospice facility, which is also the only West Michigan Hospice facility that accepts Medicare/Medicaid patients. NOCHS is among the lakeshore’s major employer, with more than 750 employees.