NEWS RELEASE

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**Center for Transforming Healthcare, SCHA Team Up to Make Health Care More Reliable**

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – February 25, 2013) The Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare and the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA) today announced the South Carolina Safe Care Commitment, a multi-year engagement that will strengthen participating hospitals’ processes, systems, and structures, resulting in patient care that is consistently excellent and consistently safe.

The initiative, which is the first of its kind for the Center, includes 20 hospitals from seven health systems located throughout the state. CEOs and other executives from participating South Carolina hospitals will meet regularly to collaborate on processes to move health care toward the same highly reliable performance seen in industries such as aviation and nuclear power.

Success will be measured through the results of safety culture survey assessments, evidence that improvement activities have produced significant reductions in patient harm, and associated cost savings. In addition, the South Carolina hospitals will utilize a Web-based electronic application created by the Center to identify critical practices leading to high reliability in health care and help hospitals assess their performance in these areas.

The collaboration between SCHA and the Center is part of the Center’s efforts to solve health care’s most critical safety and quality problems by creating solutions for progressing toward high reliability in health care. High reliability is defined as consistent performance at high
levels of safety over long periods of time. In other words, highly reliable health care is care that is dependably excellent, every time, for every patient.

“South Carolina hospitals are already involved to great effect in a number of projects that target individual safety issues such as preventable infections. This engagement is different because it offers the potential to transform hospitals into far safer providers of health care in a permanent way,” says Mark R. Chassin, M.D., FACP, M.P.P., M.P.H., president, The Joint Commission and Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare. “We applaud the courage of the South Carolina Hospital Association and its participating hospitals for daring to strive for high reliability and aiming to achieve the ultimate goal of zero patient harm.”

“We at SCHA are very proud of our member hospitals’ exemplary collaborative work in the realm of quality improvement,” says Thornton Kirby, president and CEO, The South Carolina Hospital Association. “With the launch of South Carolina Safe Care Commitment, we are ready to move to the next level of patient safety. We look forward to working closely with the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Health Care along this exciting journey to achieve high reliability.”

Beyond the hospitals initially participating in the project, the collaboration between the Center and SCHA is designed to improve safety and quality in health care organizations across the state. The lessons learned about identifying the underlying causes of specific breakdowns in care and creating targeted solutions at participating hospitals will be spread to other health care organizations. This focus on offering targeted, tested solutions has been a hallmark of the Center, which has through its Targeted Solutions Tool™ provided a step-by-step process to assist accredited health care organizations in measuring performance, identifying barriers to excellent performance, and implementing the Center’s proven solutions that are customized to address specific barriers.

For more information on the South Carolina Safe Care Commitment please contact Rick Foster, M.D., senior vice president for Quality and Patient Safety, South Carolina Hospital Association, at r foster@scha.org, or Coleen Smith, R.N., M.B.A., CPHQ, director, High Reliability Initiatives, Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare, at c smith@jointcommission.org. For media inquiries please contact Elizabeth Eaken Zhani at ezhani@jointcommission.org.

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About the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare
Launched in 2009, the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare aims to transform American health care into a high-reliability industry that ensures patients receive the safest, highest quality care they expect and deserve. The Center’s participants – the nation’s leading hospitals and health systems – use a proven, systematic approach to analyze specific breakdowns in care, discover their underlying causes and then develop targeted solutions for health care’s most critical safety and quality problems. The Center is a not-for-profit affiliate of The Joint Commission, which shares the Center’s proven effective solutions with its more than 20,000 accredited and certified health care organizations. Learn more about the Center at www.centerfortransforminghealthcare.org.

About the South Carolina Hospital Association
Founded in 1921, the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA) is the leadership organization and principal advocate for the state’s hospitals and healthcare systems. Based in Columbia, SCHA works with its members to improve access, quality, and cost-effectiveness of health care for all South Carolinians. The state’s hospitals and healthcare systems employ more than 70,000 persons statewide.