NEWS RELEASE

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Joint Commission and SGS form an Alliance to offer Coordinated Accreditation and ISO Certification Option

(OAKBROOK TERRACE, Ill. – November 2, 2011) The Joint Commission and SGS Group are joining forces to offer hospitals and critical access hospitals in the United States the option of pursuing both accreditation and certification to various ISO and industry best practice standards beginning in early 2012.

This program combines The Joint Commission’s modern health care quality and safety standards, survey process, and accountability performance measures with SGS management system audits including certification to the ISO 9001 quality management system standards. The combination of accreditation and ISO offers hospitals the tools to maintain best practices and lower costs across their entire operation while remaining focused on their core service – delivering quality health care to patients.

ISO standards articulate management systems to consistently meet established requirements. Joint Commission standards supply the valuable quality and safety enhancing
requirements which can be integrated into an organization’s quality management system. By encouraging leadership commitment to maintaining focused, organized and dynamic processes, the coordinated option has the potential to deliver extra value by improving the operating performance of the organization.

SGS, a public company, is the world’s leading verification, inspection, certification, and testing company focused on providing independent certification and quality assurance services through its worldwide network of subsidiaries, branches and agencies. SGS operates a network of 1,250 offices around the world.

The Joint Commission, and its affiliate Joint Commission International, are the leading health care accrediting bodies, both in the United States and internationally, utilizing up-to-date standards they have developed working with the health care community to help improve the quality and safety of care.

“We are providing this option for hospitals and critical access hospitals in the United States that are interested in exploring the combination of ISO education and certification with Joint Commission accreditation as a mechanism to more precisely identify system vulnerabilities and inefficiencies. Future plans are to expand the option to organizations accredited under other Joint Commission accreditation programs,” says Ann Scott Blouin, RN, Ph.D., FACHE, executive vice president, Accreditation and Certification Operations, The Joint Commission.

“Providing this enhanced service to health care organizations through the alliance of SGS and The Joint Commission is a natural progression for health care performance improvement,” says Tony Perkins, senior vice president, SGS. “We are offering health care organizations an opportunity to take advantage of a number of ISO standards which complement Joint Commission accreditation requirements. This provides a method for hospitals to focus on improvements in quality and customer service in all departments, as well as their facility’s impact on the environment.”

“As a long-time client of both The Joint Commission and SGS, the Detroit Medical Center sees many value-added benefits to coupling Joint Commission accreditation more closely with certification to ISO standards,” says Stanton Beatty, Esq., senior vice president, Regulatory and Governance, Detroit Medical Center. “Our certification to ISO standards focuses our efforts on customer satisfaction and improved performance in all our processes, while Joint Commission’s state-of-the-art health care standards provide the blueprint for safety and quality in our clinical processes. Taken together, these two activities are leading the Detroit Medical Center toward its goal of becoming a high reliability organization.”
The ISO option can be customized. Health care organizations can pursue certification at the system or hospital level, or certify departments such as radiology, laboratory, pharmacy, food service or health information management. All areas of an organization are eligible to be certified.

Hospitals have the option of selecting from a menu of certifications including ISO 9001 (quality management system), ISO 14001 (environmental management), ISO 27001 (information security), OSHAS 18001 (occupational health and safety) and food safety testing and certification.

The Joint Commission accreditation decision and the SGS ISO certification decision are separate. The survey activities of SGS and The Joint Commission can be combined during the organization’s routine accreditation survey approximately every three years. A surveillance or recertification audit is conducted by SGS annually.

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**About The Joint Commission**

Founded in 1951, The Joint Commission seeks to continuously improve health care for the public, in collaboration with other stakeholders, by evaluating health care organizations and inspiring them to excel in providing safe and effective care of the highest quality and value. The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits more than 19,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, including more than 10,300 hospitals and home care organizations, and more than 6,500 other health care organizations that provide long term care, behavioral health care, laboratory and ambulatory care services. The Joint Commission also provides certification of more than 2,000 disease-specific care programs, primary stroke centers, and health care staffing services. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation’s oldest and largest standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Learn more about The Joint Commission at www.jointcommission.org.

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**About SGS**

The SGS Group is the global leader and innovator in verification, inspection, certification and testing services. Founded in 1878, SGS is recognized as the global benchmark in quality and integrity. With more than 67,000 employees, SGS operates a network of over 1,250 offices and laboratories around the world.