

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

TO: *Media outlets in Sedgwick County*

**KANSAS HEART HOSPITAL JOINING  
BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF KANSAS NETWORK  
EFFECTIVE JAN. 1, 2010**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is pleased to announce the further expansion of its Wichita area hospital network to include the Kansas Heart Hospital, effective Jan. 1, 2010. Blue Cross is the state's largest insurer with more than 110,000 members in Sedgwick County, and has been working the past several months to offer its members more choice with an expanded, local hospital network for 2010.

"We recognize that our members value choice, which is why we have been working this year to expand our hospital network beyond an exclusive relationship with one general acute care facility," said Andrew C. Corbin, BCBSKS president/CEO. "Kansas Heart Hospital has a 10-year proven track record of providing outstanding heart care to its patients. Our new agreement with Kansas Heart will strengthen our network by giving members more choice when it comes to selecting a partner for their heart health needs."

Kansas Heart Hospital is a 54-bed subspecialty hospital providing dedicated cardiovascular and thoracic care.

"We are pleased to join the Blue Cross network and continue our mission of providing outstanding heart care for all residents of the State of Kansas and Sedgwick County," said Greg Duick, M.D., a founder and chairman of the Kansas Heart Hospital.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2010, the Blue Cross network will expand to include Via Christi Regional Medical Center and Kansas Heart Hospital. Wesley Medical Center, which has been a member of the insurer's network for nearly 70 years, remains a contracting member of the network.

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“Folks in south central Kansas are witnessing some pretty significant changes in Wichita’s health care marketplace in 2009 and 2010, which we hope better meets their needs,” Corbin said. “With the end of exclusive hospital contracts, those living in Wichita are going to have greater choice when it comes to choosing both their health insurance partner and the hospitals where they can go to maximize their health benefits.”

Blue Cross members who have Plan 65-Select should continue to go to Wesley Medical Center for all planned admissions through Dec. 31, 2009. Effective Jan. 1, 2010, Plan 65-Select members can choose between Wesley or Via Christi. All members with non-select Plan 65 can choose to receive services at any hospital which accepts Medicare payments and their Medicare supplement benefits will pay accordingly.

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**About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. BCBSKS is the state's largest health insurer, serving all Kansas counties except Johnson and Wyandotte.

**About Kansas Heart Hospital**

Founded on the principle of patient-centered health care, Kansas Heart Hospital brings together human and technological resources for a single purpose: to give each patient the best possible outcome. Kansas Heart Hospital serves patients from diagnosis through medical and surgical treatment, where both the patient and their family learn the preventive measures and life-style changes. Registered nurses are central to a patient’s successful recovery at Kansas Heart, from drawing blood to educating each patient about cardiac care after surgery. The patient care-centered ratios, go above-and-beyond normal practice: one nurse to one patient following surgery; one nurse to two patients in intensive care; one nurse to three patients in pre- and post-surgery recovery; and one nurse to four patients in acute care.

**For more information please contact:**

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