

Blue Cross Blue Shield Designates Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip ReplacementSM

Good Shepherd Medical Center Has Been Designated as Longview's only Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip ReplacementSM

LONGVIEW, TX (February 8, 2010) -- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas has designated Good Shepherd Medical Center as a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement. Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip Replacement are part of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association's expansion of its Blue Distinction[®] designation.

"Good Shepherd is proud to again receive recognition for quality health care performance. We know patients have a choice and believe quality ratings like these can impact those decisions," said Edward Banos, president and chief executive officer of Good Shepherd Medical Center. "In this electronic age, patients are making more informed decisions regarding their health care and these ratings further reinforce a hospital's performance regarding quality care."

Good Shepherd Medical Center offers comprehensive knee and hip replacement services, including a multi-disciplinary team of nurses, therapists and case managers specially trained in the care of Orthopaedic patients, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation. The Orthopaedic inpatient unit is equipped with a therapy gym so that onsite therapeutic services are readily available to patients as part of their recovery.

"Blue Distinction Centers show our commitment to working with doctors and hospitals in communities across the state to identify leading institutions that deliver better overall outcomes in patient care," says Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, vice president and chief medical officer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. "With the number of patients undergoing surgeries and hospitalizations for spine, knee and hip conditions growing dramatically, it becomes increasingly important to help these patients and their physicians identify facilities that have experience in comprehensive care with the best outcomes in these areas, including post operative rehabilitation."

The selection criteria used to evaluate facilities were developed with input from a panel of expert physicians. To be designated as a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement, the following types of criteria were evaluated. More information on selection criteria is available on www.bcbs.com:

- Established acute care inpatient facility, including intensive care, emergency care, and a full range of patient support services with full accreditation by a CMS-deemed national accreditation organization
- Experience and training of program surgeons, including case volume
- Quality management programs, including surgical checklists as well as tracking and evaluation of clinical outcomes and process of care
- Multi-disciplinary clinical pathways and teams to coordinate and streamline care, including transitions of care
- Shared decision making and preoperative patient education

The Blue Distinction designation is awarded by the Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies to medical facilities that have demonstrated expertise in delivering quality healthcare in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacement, spine surgery and transplants. The program is part of The Blues[®] efforts to collaborate with physicians and medical facilities to improve the overall quality and safety of specialty care.

The additional Blue Distinction Centers for Knee and Hip Replacement designations will bring the nation's number of Blue Distinction designations to more than 1,600—and this number is expected to increase in the coming years.

Good Shepherd Medical Center

Good Shepherd Medical Center is a 425-bed regional referral center located in Longview, Texas and designated a Level II Trauma Center. Each year, the hospital cares for more than 6,000 Orthopaedic patients. Good Shepherd has been recognized by CareChex, an independent hospital quality rating service of The Delta Group, for achieving quality outcomes in Orthopaedic services. In 2010, the hospital was ranked #1 in Texas and #2 Nationally for Orthopaedic care. Also, HealthGrades has awarded Good Shepherd Medical Center the Orthopaedic Surgery Excellence Award six years in a row.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas -- the only statewide, customer-owned health insurer in Texas -- is the largest provider of health benefits in the state, working with nearly 40,000 physicians and 400 hospitals to serve over 4.5 million members in all 254 counties. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas is a Division of Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), the country's largest customer-owned health insurer and fourth largest health insurer overall. HCSC is a Mutual Legal Reserve Company and an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Note: Designation as Blue Distinction Centers means these facilities' overall experience and aggregate data met objective criteria established in collaboration with expert clinicians' and leading professional organizations' recommendations. Individual outcomes may vary. To find out which services are covered under your policy at any facilities, please call your local Blue Cross and/or Blue Shield Plan.