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AURORA, Ohio, April 7, 2010 | The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) Awards and Recognition Committee announced today that it has selected the Duke University Health System in Durham, NC as the recipient of the 2010 ABNS Award for Nursing Certification Advocacy. The award recognizes health care organizations, facilities or departments that are strong advocates of specialty nursing certification.

“The Duke University Health System is being honored with this award for a variety of reasons, most notably their dedication to recognizing and supporting certification for their nursing staff,” Judy Lentz, Chair of the ABNS Awards Committee, said.

Among the criteria necessary to win this award, the organization must document the total number of direct patient care RNs and nursing managers and the number and percentage who are certified in specialty nursing. Nearly 30 percent of direct caregivers and 62 percent of the nursing management employed at Duke are certified. “These numbers demonstrate that the hospital’s management, at all levels, is committed to growing certification and providing unmatched patient care,” Lentz said. “This is the hallmark of the Advocacy Award and we congratulate the Duke Health System for the work that they have done.”

Other criteria include how the organization supports those nurses interested in seeking certification. Duke encourages certification through a system of career ladders that are designed to reward and promote certified nurses, on-site courses for exam preparation, paid leave for nurses attending educational events and conferences, opportunities to earn continuing education credit for recertification, and financial payments to cover certification and recertification fees. Duke currently offers a one-time payment of \$1,000 at the time of initial certification and \$750 for recertification.

Dr. William J. Fulkerson, Senior Vice President of Clinical Affairs at DUHS, said promoting certification also makes good business sense. “Today’s consumers are more informed and involved in health care than ever before. The initials of certification go far in letting our patients know that our certified nurses are operating at the highest level of skill and expertise.”

Utilizing a grant from BearingPoint, a global consulting company focused on systems integration, and managed services, Duke created the Certification Ambassadors Council in 2006. The council is a formal group within the health system (complete with bylaws, mission and vision statements, and values) whose mission is to promote a culture that values and encourages nursing certification. It hosts recognition events such as the annual nursing certification breakfast

and activities related to Certified Nurses Day and Nurse Week. It is also responsible for placing announcements recognizing new certificants in the system's internal publications.

"DUHS's overarching goals are to ensure that our nurses and entire health care team understand the value of specialty certification and to encourage them to become involved in all capacities of the health care system, such as teaching, advocating, or volunteering with specialty organizations," said Mary Ann Fuchs, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing and Patient Care Services Officer at DUHS. "It is important to us that all of our certified nurses are recognized for their achievement."

Recognition and commitment from the Duke Health System senior management includes a personal note from the Chief Nursing Officer and annual reports to the senior leadership team on the status of certification among the nursing staff. "All of these activities represent the value placed on nursing certification and reflect why Duke University Health System was selected as this year's recipient of this prestigious award," Lentz said.

Through efforts such as those demonstrated the Duke University Health System, the ABNS Vision - Specialty nursing care is *the* standard by which the public recognizes quality nursing care - will be achieved. For more information on the requirements of the award, visit www.nursingcertification.org.

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Editors Note:

The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) is a membership organization whose mission is to promote the value of specialty nursing certification to all stakeholders. Currently, 33 ABNS Regular Member represent nearly half a million specialty certified registered nurses. Its 10 Affiliate Members include providers of key certification-related testing products and services. One Public Member represents the consumer's perspectives on issues about specialty nursing certification. For further information about ABNS, visit www.nursingcertification.org or email Bonnie Niebuhr, MS, RN, CAE, Chief Executive Officer, at bniebuhr@nursingcertification.org.

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