

Southern Surgical Hospital – *Media Release*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOUTHERN SURGICAL HOSPITAL AWARDED CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR BARIATRIC SURGERY

Slidell, LA. – June 22, 2007...Southern Surgical Hospital announced today it has been awarded Center of Excellence status for bariatric surgery. Center of Excellence (COE) status is awarded to facilities who meet the high standards set forth by the American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) in safety, patient care, and overall positive surgical results.

"Our specialty requires unique dedication to care for patients comprehensively for life. For a hospital that has been opened only 20 months, this shows a tremendous commitment to the highest standards of care," stated Michael J. Thomas, M.D., FACS, Medical Director, Bariatric Program, Southern Surgical Hospital. "Our patients have confidence that the hospital *and* surgeons are experts in the field of bariatric surgery."

The ASBS Centers of Excellence program was created to recognize bariatric surgery centers that perform well and to help surgeons and hospitals continue to improve the quality and care provided. The process to earn a Center of Excellence is rigorous and extensive. To qualify, a facility must undergo site inspections and consistently meet the safety criteria, surgical processes, and patient outcome standards set forth by Surgical Review Corporation (SRC), an organization committed to surgical excellence. Only those physicians and facilities whose practices and outcomes meet the stringent demands set forth by SRC and ASBS are awarded Center of Excellence status.

Southern Surgical Hospital offers a comprehensive surgical weight loss program including free monthly weight loss surgery support group meetings, free weight loss surgery seminars presented by one of the specializing surgeons, and a bariatric coordinator that follows the patient all the way through their surgical experience. For more information call Kim Mulkey, Bariatric Coordinator, at 985.661.2172.

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About Southern Surgical Hospital Southern Surgical Hospital (SSH) is a multi-specialty, 63,538 square-foot short-stay hospital located in Slidell, Louisiana. The hospital houses six operating suites, one pain treatment room, a procedure room; two sleep lab beds, 32 inpatient beds, and five ICU beds. SSH also provides diagnostic imaging services including: CT, EKG, Fluoroscopy, MRI, Ultrasound, and routine radiology. SSH hospital is owned and operated by physicians in partnership with Cirrus Health.

About American Society for Bariatric Surgery

The American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) is the largest society for this specialty in the world. Founded in 1983, foremost American surgeons have formed the society's leadership and have established an excellent organization with educational and support programs for surgeons and allied health professionals. The purpose of the society is to advance the art and science of bariatric surgery by continued encouragement of its members to: pursue investigations in both the clinical and the laboratory; interchange ideas, information and experience pertaining to bariatric surgery; promote guidelines for ethical patient selection and care; develop educational programs for physicians, paramedical persons, and lay people; and promote outcome studies and quality assurance. For more information about ASBS, please visit www.asbs.org.

About Surgical Review Corporation

Surgical Review Corporation (SRC) is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to surgical excellence. SRC's mission is to promote the delivery of surgical care with the highest levels of efficacy, efficiency, and safety possible. For more information about SRC or to download a Center of Excellence application, please visit www.surgicalreview.org.

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