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**West Jefferson Medical Center
Recognized for Higher Quality in Bariatric Surgery**

(July 17, 2018 – Marrero, LA) Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana has recognized West Jefferson Medical Center with a Blue Distinction® Center for Bariatric Surgery designation as part of the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program. Blue Distinction Centers are nationally designated hospitals that show expertise in delivering improved patient safety and better health outcomes, based on objective measures that were developed with input from the medical community.

To receive a Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery designation, a health care facility must demonstrate success in meeting patient safety measures as well as bariatric-specific quality measures, including complication and readmission rate for laparoscopic procedures in sleeve gastrectomy, gastric bypass and adjustable gastric band. A health care facility must also be nationally accredited at both the facility and bariatric program-specific levels.

In 2017, the Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery program expanded to include not only the type of service provided, but also the site of care. Healthcare facilities were evaluated as either a comprehensive center or as an ambulatory surgery center.

West Jefferson Medical Center is proud to be recognized by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana for meeting the rigorous Blue Distinction Center quality selection criteria for bariatric surgery set by the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program.

“We are extremely honored to receive this important recognition for our excellent weight loss surgery program,” said Nancy R. Cassagne, President and CEO at West Jefferson Medical Center. “Our program has helped patients in our community take control of their weight and improve their lives. This designation highlights the high quality, compassionate care we provide to our patients.”

Bariatric surgeries are among the most common elective surgeries in the U.S., which provides significant opportunity to improve quality within the health care system. There were 196,000 bariatric surgeries performed in 2015, according to the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS), and the average cost is more than \$28,000 per episode, according to the Journal

of the American Medical Association. Furthermore, it is estimated that nearly 36.5 percent of U.S. adults and 17 percent of youth are obese and impacted by obesity-related health conditions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The estimated annual health care costs of obesity-related conditions are nearly \$210 billion per year in the U.S., according to the Journal of Health Economics. On average, health care costs were reduced by 29 percent within five years following bariatric surgery, due to the reduction or elimination of obesity-related conditions, according to ASMBS.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) companies across the nation have recognized more than 550 health care facilities as Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery. Health care facilities recognized with this designation are assessed using a combination of publicly available quality information and cost measures derived from BCBS companies' medical claims.

Since 2006, the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality specialty care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cancer care, cardiac care, maternity care, knee and hip replacements, spine surgery and transplants, while encouraging health care professionals to improve the care they deliver. Research shows that, compared to other hospitals, those designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate better quality and improved outcomes for patients.

For more information about the program and for a complete listing of the designated facilities, please visit www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction.

About West Jefferson Medical Center

Founded in 1956, West Jefferson Medical Center (WJMC) is a 435-bed community hospital located in Marrero, La. As a full service medical center, WJMC offers comprehensive programs for preventive, emergency, acute and rehabilitative care with a medical staff of more than 400 physicians and a complement of 1,700 employees and many volunteers. The medical center enjoys national awards for clinical excellence across many of its subspecialties. WJMC is a proud member of LCMC Health, a Louisiana-based, not-for-profit hospital system serving the healthcare needs of the Gulf Coast region. LCMC Health currently manages award-winning community hospitals including Children's Hospital, Touro, New Orleans East Hospital, University Medical Center New Orleans and West Jefferson Medical Center.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana

Founded in New Orleans in 1934, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is a tax-paying nonprofit health insurer. We are a private mutual company, owned by our policyholders, with an independent Louisiana Board of Directors and no shareholders. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is committed to our mission to improve the health and lives of Louisianians. Headquartered in Baton Rouge, we have eight regional offices to serve our customers around the state. We invite all Louisianians to visit our website at www.BCBSLA.com or talk to us on social media.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. BCBSA provides health care insights through [The Health of America Report](#) series and the national BCBS Health Index. For more information on BCBSA and its member companies, please visit www.BCBS.com. We also encourage you to connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and check out our [blog](#).

About Blue Distinction Centers

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures for patient safety and outcomes, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for providers located in its own service area; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers' need for affordable health care. Each provider's cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Providers in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans' areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on www.BCBS.com. Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.

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