



For Immediate Release  
Contact: Sara Searcy, Director of Marketing/PR  
766-1799

## **Blue Ridge Regional Hospital Accredited in Echocardiography**

One American dies every 32 seconds of cardiovascular disease, disorders of the heart and blood vessels. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, costing over 83.7 billion dollars each year in health services, medications and lost work time due to disability. Cardiac structure and flow information provided by echocardiographic testing is useful in the detection and management of many types of heart disease. This noninvasive test has become one of the standard diagnostic tools in cardiology with an estimated 10 million echocardiograms performed annually in the United States. Echocardiography is a complex imaging technique that relies on the experience and training of both the physician and sonographer. Their interpretive and technical abilities determine the diagnostic accuracy of an echocardiographic examination. The Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories (ICAEL) has developed an accreditation program, which evaluates the quality of these and other critical elements of an echocardiography laboratory.

Blue Ridge Regional Hospital, Cardiology/Radiology was recently granted accreditation by the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories. The laboratory is one of the first one thousand echocardiography laboratories in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico to be so recognized for its commitment to high quality patient care and its provision of quality diagnostic testing. “Becoming accredited in echocardiography was voluntary, but we felt it was necessary to show our patients that we have top-notch technology and a highly qualified staff here at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital,” said Robin Nichols, director of imaging services. “Accreditation was completed by a peer review team from the Society of Pediatric Echocardiography, a non-profit organization that is dedicated to ensuring high quality patient care and promoting health care.”

Participation in the accreditation process is voluntary. Accreditation status signifies that the facility has been reviewed by an independent agency, which recognizes the laboratory’s commitment to quality testing for the diagnosis of heart disease.

*Blue Ridge Regional Hospital, formerly Spruce Pine Community Hospital, is nationally ranked as a Thompson Top 100 hospital located in Spruce Pine, NC. For more*

*information about services offered at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital, log onto  
www.brrhospital.org.*

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