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MEDIA RELEASE

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Nursing Team from Ghana To Train At Sara Lee Center for Women's Health June 1-5 as Part of International Effort to Improve Childbirth Conditions

Winston-Salem, N.C. – Hundreds of women die in Ghana each year while giving birth. Most of the deaths are caused by excessive bleeding and pre-eclampsia, serious conditions that are usually considered treatable or even avoidable in the West. In Ghana, however, overcrowded hospitals and a lack of access to specialized training make these high-risk conditions even more dangerous.

From June 1 to 5, three nurses from the Ridge Hospital in Accra, Ghana, will be training at Forsyth Medical Center's Sara Lee Center for Women's Health to learn new ways to treat their country's high-risk pregnancy patients. This initiative is part of an ongoing exchange between this community and Ghana established in November 2004 by Kybele, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to improving childbirth conditions worldwide through medical education partnerships. A number of physicians and nurses from Forsyth Medical Center have also visited Ghana as part of this exchange.

"Ridge Hospital is a large regional hospital that has about the same number of deliveries each year as Forsyth Medical Center, but the space is very inadequate and the infrastructure is limited," explains Medge Owen, M.D., an obstetric anesthesiologist with Wake Forest University School of Medicine who practices at the Sara Lee Center for Women's Health. "By bringing three nurses who work in leadership positions at Ridge Hospital to the Sara Lee Center for Women's Health, we hope to help make their system more efficient and lower mortality rates for mothers and newborns."

The Ghanaian nurses will shadow nurses at the Sara Lee Center for Women's Health to observe the process for obstetrical patients from admittance to discharge, learn how the nurses manage high-risk obstetrical patients and watch how the nursing staff performs their patient assessments and the collection/organization of patient data. The nurses will also spend a week touring hospitals in Chapel Hill and Durham as part of their trip.

Kybele has also established a five-year partnership with the Ghana Health Service, which governs all healthcare in the country. During that time, training events similar to this one have helped change childbirth conditions at Ridge Hospital. In addition, some practices established through Kybele's work at Ridge Hospital are already making a national impact on childbirth practices throughout other hospitals in Ghana.

"Maternal and infant mortality in many developing countries is unacceptably high," says Karen Bartoletti, vice president of the Sara Lee Center for Women's Health. "Many of the causes are easily preventable or treatable, if hospitals have the right tools and the training to take advantage of them. By participating in exchange programs like this, we can share our knowledge and best practices that can have a significant impact on improving the health of women and babies not just in our own community but across the globe."

This exchange provides an excellent opportunity to interview the nursing team from Ghana and to profile one of our community's efforts to improve health conditions in Ghana. For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Freda Springs at 277-8601 (office), or 287-4203 (cell).

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About Forsyth Medical Center

Forsyth Medical Center is part of Novant Health, a not-for-profit integrated group of hospitals and physician clinics, ranked 12th nationally among the 2009 Top 100 Integrated Healthcare Networks, according to an analysis by the SDI health informatics company. Novant staff cares for patients and communities in North and South Carolina. Hospital affiliates include Presbyterian Hospital, Presbyterian Orthopaedic Hospital, Presbyterian Hospital Matthews and Presbyterian Hospital Huntersville in the Charlotte, NC area; Forsyth Medical Center and Medical Park Hospital in Winston-Salem, NC; Thomasville Medical Center in Thomasville, NC; Rowan Regional Medical Center in Salisbury, NC; and Brunswick Community Hospital in Supply, NC. The Novant Medical Group consists of more than 1,060 providers in 361 clinic locations. Other Novant facilities and programs include two nursing homes, outpatient surgery and diagnostic centers, rehabilitation programs and community health outreach programs.