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***SOUTH CAROLINA'S HOSPITALS PROVIDED MORE THAN \$1.3 BILLION
IN COMMUNITY BENEFITS TO MORE THAN 4.8 MILLION CITIZENS***

First statewide survey shows impact of hospitals on public health

COLUMBIA, SC, October 22, 2007 — The South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA) today announced the findings of its first statewide compilation of community benefits provided by member hospitals and the numbers are significant. According to the *Healthy Hospitals | Healthy Lives: SCHA 2007 Hospital Community Benefits Report*, in fiscal year 2006 South Carolina hospitals provided more than \$1.3 billion in community benefit services to more than 4.8 million participants.

Commenting on the announcement, SCHA Board Chair and Georgetown Hospital System CEO Bruce Bailey said the findings quantify the tremendous impact hospitals have on the state's public health and on the lives of individual citizens. "In addition to being providers of high quality health care services, South Carolina hospitals go beyond their walls to improve access to care, to reduce health disparities, to educate the public, and to prevent disease. This report quantifies hospital community benefits, but also puts a face on the providers and beneficiaries."

The report findings are based on data voluntarily submitted by 65 South Carolina hospitals using a questionnaire developed ten years ago by the Michigan Hospital Association. The detailed

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questionnaire mirrors guidelines developed jointly by the Voluntary Hospital Association (VHA) and the Catholic Hospital Association (CHA), which are often considered a national model for the collection of hospital community benefits data. Additional information for the report was secured from the South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics, part of the State Budget and Control Board, to which South Carolina hospitals routinely report data.

SCHA President and CEO J. Thornton Kirby said the report also sheds light on the connection between financially healthy hospitals and healthy communities. “The two are intrinsically linked. Hospitals that receive adequate reimbursement for services from government and private payers are able to provide much-needed community benefits services. In turn, communities rely on hospitals for education, prevention, support services, and in many cases free care for the uninsured and underinsured. It’s important that policy and business leaders as well as the general public understand the added value delivered by their community hospitals,” Kirby said.

Community benefits fall into two categories, traditional and non-traditional. Traditional community benefits are uncompensated care costs and include health care services provided to patients who are unable to pay as well as the unreimbursed costs of government programs such as Medicaid and Medicare. Nontraditional community benefits are programs and services offered by South Carolina’s hospitals out in the community—beyond hospital walls—to improve health status or increase access to care. These include health screenings, education, support groups and other services designed to improve access to care and improve public health.

Other notable statistics in the report include:

- South Carolina hospitals provided more than \$1.2 billion in uncompensated care.
- South Carolina hospitals delivered nearly \$30 million in free or reduced-fee community health improvement services (health education, screenings, immunizations, support groups) to ensure healthier children, safer environments, earlier detection of disease, and enhanced access to basic health care services.

- South Carolina hospitals invested nearly \$50 million in health professions education.
- South Carolina hospitals supported medical research to the tune of nearly \$10 million dollars.

The complete statewide report is available to the public at www.scha.org.

About the South Carolina Hospital Association

Headquartered in Columbia, the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA) is a private, not-for-profit organization made up of nearly 100 hospitals and health systems and 900 individual members. An advocate on healthcare issues affecting South Carolinians, SCHA supports its members through advocacy, education, networking, and regulatory assistance.