

# For Immediate Release

12/5/2006 12:00:00 AM PACIFIC  
Updated: 12/5/2006 9:12:22 AM PACIFIC  
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## >> St. Charles Announces New Financing Program for Patients

A ST. CHARLES MEDICAL CENTERS IN BEND AND REDMOND ANNOUNCE NEW INTEREST-FREE, EXTENDED TERM FINANCING PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO PATIENTS

Faced with rising health care costs and increasing patient financial responsibility, a new 0.00% financing program at St. Charles provides patients with a needed payment option.

December 5, 2006 (Bend, OR) — To provide patients with more payment options and help ease concerns about how to cover the ever-increasing number of “self-pay” expenses (out-of-pocket hospital care costs not covered by insurance or other providers) St. Charles Medical Center – Bend and St. Charles Redmond have partnered with Aequitas Capital Management to offer patients CarePayment, an extended-term, 0.00% financing program.

***“CarePayment is the kind of patient-friendly payment program that has been in high demand by hospitals and patients alike. It provides an additional option to traditional payment terms and payment methods of cash, check or credit card,” explained Diana Mahnke, Director of Patient Financial Services. “With the introduction of CarePayment, our patients will be offered the benefit of an extended-term, interest-free finance program for qualified services to create a payment plan that may better suit their budget.”***

***The CarePayment program features a 0.00% hospital-branded payment card that is available to patients — regardless of employment or credit history. There is no approval or application process and additional hospital charges may be added to the card as long as the patient is current with their monthly payments.***

Aequitas Capital Management developed CarePayment to address the financial challenges patients often face, whether it’s due to higher co-pays and insurance deductibles, or the lack of medical insurance altogether. ***“Our critical goal for CarePayment is to provide St. Charles patients with an easy and affordable way to pay their out-of-pocket expenses,” said Steve Wright, Aequitas’ Senior Managing Director of Healthcare Markets. “The CarePayment program reflects our ongoing commitment to developing socially responsible financial services that create a positive impact for our clients and their communities.”***

*In addition to offering patients further payment options, the CarePayment program allows St. Charles Financial Counselors the opportunity to provide greater patient advocacy services. “We are looking forward to our caregivers being able to move away from the typical collections process and into more of a resource role – providing our patients with access to programs that can help support them,” said Mahnke. “We believe that this program is going to have a very positive impact on our patients and on the services that our Financial Counselors are going to be able to provide for them.”*

*CarePayment is currently available to all patients of St. Charles for most procedures, including patients with outstanding balances, for qualified services.* To learn more about how to participate, contact the St. Charles Patient Financial Services department at (541) 388-7750 or 1-800-972-3194.

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#### About Cascade Healthcare Community

Cascade Healthcare Community (CHC), based in Bend, Oregon, is The parent organization for St. Charles Medical Center – Bend, St. Charles Redmond and their affiliated services. CHC is a private, not-for-profit Oregon corporation with approximately 2,500 caregivers in Bend and Redmond, and is the largest employer in Central Oregon.

#### About Aequitas Capital Management

Aequitas Capital Management is an investment management firm Providing integrated corporate advisory and commercial finance Products and services. Since 1993, Aequitas has structured and invested more than \$1.5 billion in customized financial transactions to the middle market, energy and healthcare sectors. For more information visit [www.aequitascapital.com](http://www.aequitascapital.com).