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**BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER AWARDED FIVE-STAR RATINGS
FOR SPINE SURGERY FOR THIRD YEAR IN A ROW BY HEALTHGRADES**

HealthGrades' annual study of hospital quality is most comprehensive nationwide and patients treated at 5-star hospitals are 47% less likely to have complications

New York, NY (December 16, 2008) – Beth Israel Medical Center has recently been awarded a top, five-star rating for the quality of its orthopedic care by HealthGrades, the leading independent healthcare ratings company. For the third year in a row, Beth Israel Medical Center has been five-star rated for Back and Neck Surgery, ranking them among the top 10 hospitals in New York for Spine Surgery.

This commitment to orthopedic excellence is reflective in Beth Israel Medical Center's continued achievements. In 2008, Beth Israel Medical Center was rated Best in Manhattan for Overall Orthopedics, and ranked among the top 10% in the nation for Spine Surgery.

"The Spine Institute's team of health professionals prides themselves on delivering personalized, multi-disciplinary care to patients from diagnosis through treatment," says David J. Shulkin, MD, President of Beth Israel Medical Center. "Furthermore, they believe in using the least invasive treatment option possible, which may include pain management, rehabilitation and physical/occupational therapy. When surgical intervention is needed, the Spine Institute uses the latest technology and innovation to perform the least invasive surgery possible with the most effective and safe results. We're proud to see their hard work recognized by HealthGrades."

As part of the nation's most comprehensive, independent analysis of hospital quality, HealthGrades found that patients treated at five-star rated hospitals for nine common procedures are 47 percent less likely to experience a major complication, such as post-operative infections or heart conditions, which can lengthen their hospital stay and increase costs. According to the study, if all Medicare patients had been treated at a top-performing hospital compared to the lowest-performing hospitals during 2005-07, more than 123,000 major complications potentially could have been avoided.

In developing its 2009 healthcare quality ratings, released on October 14, 2008, HealthGrades analyzed more than 41 million Medicare hospitalization records from 2005 to 2007 at the nation's approximately 5,000 non-federal hospitals. Hospitals with outcomes that are above average to a statistically significant degree receive a five-star rating. Hospitals with average outcomes receive a three-star rating, and hospitals with outcomes that are below average receive a one-star rating. Because no two hospitals or their patients' risk profiles are alike, HealthGrades employs extensive risk-adjustment algorithms to ensure that it is making analogous comparisons.

On its Web site, www.healthgrades.com, HealthGrades offers consumers free quality ratings of 26 procedures and treatments. The Web site is designed so that consumers can easily compare patient outcomes at their local hospitals for procedures ranging from total knee surgery to cardiac bypass surgery. Each hospital receives a star rating based on its patient outcomes in terms of mortality or complication rates for each procedure or treatment. For example, complications can include hospital-acquired infections, heart and lung difficulties during or after surgery, and excessive bleeding.

About The Spine Institute at Beth Israel Medical Center

Located in the heart of New York City at 10 Union Square East, The Spine Institute of New York provides comprehensive care for all types of spine-related conditions and injuries. The Spine Institute features a talented multidisciplinary team of health professionals. Our orthopedic surgeons and physiatrists are all Board-Certified and have specialized in care of the spine. They work closely with professionals in neurology, anesthesiology, physical and occupational therapy and psychology to provide the most complete

care and guide patients to fullest possible recovery. The Spine Institute specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of congenital, chronic or acute spinal disorders, as well as all types of back problems. From strains and sprains to the most complex spine problems, such as herniated discs, scoliosis, degenerative disc and stenosis, physicians employ the latest medical science has to offer. To pinpoint the causes and location of back pain, the Spine Institute uses the most technologically advanced equipment for accurate diagnosis. Minimally invasive microsurgical and arthroscopic techniques are used on an inpatient and outpatient basis for certain interventions, including discectomies, while major surgical capabilities are available for more complicated problems. Spine surgeries are performed at the new state-of-the-art, technologically advanced operating rooms at Beth Israel Medical Center. The Spine Institute also offers the latest in non-physician therapeutics, such as physical therapy. Highly trained professionals work closely with the surgeons and physicians to provide integrated, team-based care to all patients. Rehabilitation facilities also include up-to-date offerings in complementary medicine like aerobic training, yoga and meditation room with showers and changing rooms. All these elements combine to provide patients with the most advanced and integrated care available for spine and back problems. With the focus on spine, surgeons care for a high volume of surgical cases, maintaining unparalleled skills. The Spine Institute delivers clinically proven and consistently superior results for patients.

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