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WELLINGTON REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER NAMED A BLUES DISTINCTION CENTER FOR BARIATRIC SURGERY

July 30, 2021 – The Wellington Regional Medical Center's Weight Management Center was recently recognized by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association with a Blue Distinction® Centers for Bariatric Surgery designation – the recognition is part of the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program. Blue Distinction Centers are nationally designated healthcare facilities that show a commitment to delivering high-quality patient safety

and better health outcomes, based on objective measures that were developed with input from the medical community and leading accreditation and quality organizations. The hospital's bariatric program is already accredited by the American College of Surgeon's Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP).

The Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery program provides a full range of bariatric surgery care; including surgical care, post-operative care, outpatient follow-up care, and patient education.

"Since the Wellington Regional Weight Management Center began treating patients in 2018, it has continued to offer several options for people who struggle with weight loss," said Pam Tahan, CEO, Wellington Regional Medical Center. "The Blue Distinction is an indication of the hospital's commitment to providing the highest quality surgical options and outcomes for patients who choose to have bariatric surgery."

Bariatric surgeries are among the most common elective surgeries in the U.S. – with more than 252,000 bariatric surgeries performed in 2018 based on a report from the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS). Furthermore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that nearly 42.7 percent of U.S. adults and 18.5 percent of youth are obese and are impacted by obesity-related health conditions. With obesity reaching epidemic levels among U.S. adults, the annual healthcare costs of obesity and obesity-related conditions is expected to rise \$48-66 billion by 2030, if the rate of obesity in the U.S. continues to climb. Bariatric surgery can be an effective treatment option for severely obese patients because it allows for substantial, sustained weight loss and possible resolution of obesity-related co-morbidities such as type 2 diabetes. On average, healthcare costs were reduced by 29 percent within five years following bariatric surgery, due to the reduction or elimination of obesity-related conditions, based on

findings by ASMBS.

To receive a Blue Distinction Centers for Bariatric Surgery designation, a healthcare facility must demonstrate success in meeting patient safety measures as well as bariatric-specific quality measures, including complication and readmission rate for laparoscopic procedures in sleeve gastrectomy, gastric bypass and adjustable gastric band. All designated facilities must also be nationally accredited at both the facility and bariatric program-specific levels.

About Wellington Regional Medical Center

Wellington Regional Medical Center is a 235-bed acute care hospital accredited by The Joint Commission. Celebrating more than 30 years of treating residents in Wellington and the surrounding community, the hospital offers a wide range of services, including comprehensive stroke care, comprehensive lung program, minimally invasive services, cardiac services, a birthing center and level III NICU, comprehensive women's center, hepatobiliary surgical procedures, intraoperative radiation therapy, interventional procedures and a wellness and weight loss center. To learn more about the hospital, please visit www.wellingtonregional.com.

About the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. BCBSA provides health care insights through [The Health of America Report](#) series and the national BCBS Health IndexSM. For more information on BCBSA and its member companies, please visit bcbs.com. We also encourage you to connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and check out our [blog](#).

About Blue Distinction Centers

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for providers located in its own service area; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers' need for affordable healthcare. Each provider's cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Providers in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans' areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on www.bcbs.com. Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for noncovered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.

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