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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Volunteers from Three Minnesota-based Cardiac Centers of Excellence Embark on Training Visit to Brazil

Medical volunteers from Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital to help treat children and advance Hospital de Base's pediatric cardiac services

Minneapolis, Minn. (January 7, 2011) — On January 8, 2011, Children's HeartLink will send a team of volunteers on a seven-day cardiac training visit to Hospital de Base in São José do Rio Preto, Brazil. The team of medical volunteers, led by Children's HeartLink Medical Director and Mayo Clinic Pediatric Cardiac Surgeon Joseph A. Dearani, M.D., will consist of physicians and nurses from Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota Amplatz Children's Hospital. Volunteers from each hospital have previously volunteered with Children's HeartLink but not together in this combination. The team will spend the week working together with and training Hospital de Base pediatric cardiac staff, as well as providing patient screening and treatment.

The partnership between Children's HeartLink and Hospital de Base was established in 2009, and this is the third training visit Children's HeartLink has sponsored to the hospital. The volunteer medical team will perform operations on children suffering from heart disease and work with local medical staff to assess needs and plan for future joint activities that will continue to strengthen the Hospital de Base pediatric cardiac program.

"The staff at Hospital de Base is extremely committed to caring for children with heart disease. We are excited and honored to continue our partnership and to help them enhance their pediatric cardiac diagnostic, treatment and prevention services," said Elizabeth Perlich Sweeney, president of Children's HeartLink.

During this cardiac training visit the team will:

1. Exchange technical skills and knowledge related to the diagnosis and treatment of cardiac patients through teaching
2. Participate in the diagnosis and treatment of pediatric cardiac patients whose cases relate to the teaching needs and goals of the Hospital de Base cardiac program, specifically related to complex diagnoses and re-operation in older children
3. Strengthen and enhance communication and cooperation between cardiac team members
4. Identify current challenges facing pediatric cardiac services at Hospital de Base and identify interim strategies
5. Work together to plan for future collaboration to advance pediatric cardiac services at Hospital de Base

About Children's HeartLink

Founded in 1969, Children's HeartLink is a nonprofit organization working in partnership with health care centers in underserved regions of the world to promote sustainable cardiac care for children with congenital or acquired heart disease. Children's HeartLink partners with health care providers in medically underserved areas, empowering local hospitals to care for children in their region with consistent, quality and sustainable pediatric cardiac services. See www.childrensheartlink.org for more information.

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