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VHI's Cardiac Report Celebrates American Heart Month Online Information Helps Consumers Compare Hospital Quality of Care and Prevent Heart Disease

Richmond, VA -- In celebration of American Heart Month, Virginia Health Information (VHI) has published its Cardiac Care Report. The report lets consumers compare rates of mortality for cardiac patients in Virginia hospitals, 30-day hospital readmissions and how often hospitals provide a variety of cardiac care services.

VHI's Cardiac Care Report is a free, online tool at <http://www.vhi.org/cardiac> that empowers consumers with reliable information about cardiac treatment in 87 Virginia hospitals. The report helps consumers make more informed decisions when managing their heart health with their doctor. Five years of performance information are provided in three categories:

- ♥ **Medical Cardiology:** Non-surgical therapy for heart disease such as angina, congestive heart failure and heart attacks
- ♥ **Invasive Cardiology:** Surgeries including cardiac catheterization, cardiac pacemaker insertion, balloon angioplasty and placement of cardiac stents
- ♥ **Open Heart Surgery:** Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery and cardiac valve operations

Along with the report, VHI helps consumers find physicians treating heart disease. Physician profiles include information on their location, education, specialties, languages spoken and hospital affiliation. Consumers may also learn steps they can take to help prevent heart disease, recognize heart attack warning signs, review tips to prevent hospital readmissions and compare hospital patient satisfaction rates.

"Heart disease and related conditions are the leading cause of death and hospitalization in Virginia and the US," notes Michael T. Lundberg, VHI's Executive Director. "It is important for Virginians to have access to information on preventing and treating heart disease. Our report, developed with help from consumers, health care providers and businesses combines a broad range of information consumers want—including key hospital quality measures."

In Virginia, the number of cardiac care discharges has declined 14% from 2008-2012. The reasons for this decline are not clear, but possible explanations include better control of risk factors like high blood pressure, effective use of medications and more patients treated in emergency rooms and clinics without being admitted to hospitals.

There is also good news on mortality rates. From 2008 to 2012, hospital mortality rates for all cardiac care dropped from 2.12% to 1.70%. However, the rate of 30-day readmissions following cardiac care increased, from 10.89% to 11.25%. Although readmission rates for all patients have increased slightly, hospitals are working to reduce 30-day readmission rates for certain conditions covered by the Medicare program.

Virginia Health Information (VHI) is the independent, nonprofit organization that Virginians, businesses, health care providers and others depend upon for health information. For those without Internet access, call 1-877-VHI-INFO to receive information by mail. VHI publishes reports and consumer guides on health care prices, health insurance, hospitals, HMOs, nursing facilities, physicians and other topics at www.vhi.org.

Virginia Cardiac Care Discharges, Readmission, & Mortality Rates

