



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota reach contract agreement**

*June 20, 2008-- Grand Rapids--*Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota announced today that they have reached a contract agreement for both the Grand Itasca clinic and hospital to be a part of the Blue Cross provider network. The announcement was made by John Kutch, Chief Executive Officer of Grand Itasca, and Jim Eppel, Vice President of Network Management, of Blue Cross.

The two organizations have been working since last year to develop a mutually agreeable contract which would enable the clinic and hospital to operate as an “in-network” provider with Blue Cross. The new contract is for a three and one half year term, and is effective as of **July 1, 2008**. Blue Cross will be communicating with members and employers through letters and employer notices.

“We worked to develop a long-term agreement that allows Grand Itasca to continue our focus on delivering quality patient-centered care possible, and yet recognizes the need to keep health care as affordable as possible,” said John Kutch. “We have a functional agreement that supports the partnership model that Grand Itasca and BCBSMN have committed to - to improve the health and health care resources in the region.”

“Grand Itasca provides many important provider and hospital services to our members, and we are pleased that the contract has been finalized and that our provider network again includes this organization and medical staff,” said Jim Eppel.

Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital is a non-profit, integrated delivery system that employs nearly 600 people. The integrated clinic and hospital, described as a “modern expression of hospitality and healing” is home to more than 40 physicians and other providers, including specialists in Orthopedics, Ob/Gyn, Pediatrics, Urology, Acute Rehabilitation and Podiatry.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota is a not-for-profit, taxable organization and is the largest health plan based in Minnesota, covering 2.9 million members. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, headquartered in Chicago.