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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 8, 2008

**PUGET SOUND AND SPOKANE REGION HOSPITALS LOOK TO RECEIVE REWARDS
FOR HIGH QUALITY PATIENT CARE**

**Aetna to Pilot Hospital Incentive and Reward Program
With The Leapfrog Group**

(SEATTLE WA) –The Leapfrog Group and Aetna announce the launch of a Leapfrog Hospital Rewards Program™ (LHRP) pilot in the Puget Sound and Spokane regions. Aetna is the first *national* health insurance plan to pilot the hospital incentive and reward program with The Leapfrog Group. The LHRP is the first national hospital incentive program that can be licensed and implemented by private healthcare purchasers -- employers, healthcare coalitions, and health plans -- to advance hospital performance improvement and enhance the value of hospital care.

The Leapfrog Hospital Rewards Program™ measures the quality of care and the efficiency with which hospitals use resources in clinical areas that represent a significant portion of hospital admissions and expenditures among the commercially-insured population. The program utilizes a standardized methodology to assess the value of patient care by measuring performance along two dimensions – the quality of the care hospitals provide and how effectively they deliver it. The methodology employs nationally accepted quality measures endorsed by the National Quality Forum (NQF) and collected and reported by the Joint Commission and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). To measure efficiency of resource use, Leapfrog examines severity-adjusted average length of stay and readmission rates. All data are collected from hospitals via the Leapfrog Hospital Quality and Safety Survey.

“The Leapfrog Hospital Rewards pilot program will enable us to identify hospitals providing improved quality and more efficient care,” said Drew Oliveira, M.D., medical director for Aetna’s Northwest markets. “Through the data gathered during this pilot, hospitals will be able to create processes to minimize medical errors and achieve the best possible outcomes for our members.

“Aetna strives to work collaboratively with doctors, hospitals and employers to improve health care quality and efficiency, and this pilot is another example of that commitment,” Oliveira said.

“At Virginia Mason, we are well aligned with employers and Aetna around support of Leapfrog’s emphasis on quality. Better quality means better access to care, better outcomes and better value for the dollar,” said Gary Kaplan, M.D., CEO and chairman, Virginia Mason Medical Center. “Creative approaches like the Leapfrog Hospital Rewards Program will help spur needed change in our health care system.”

Karen Linscott, Acting CEO of The Leapfrog Group, stated, "The main goal of the Leapfrog Hospital Rewards Program™ is to provide extra incentives for hospitals to improve patient care."

Aetna

Aetna is one of the nation's leading diversified health care benefits companies, serving approximately 36.4 million people with information and resources to help them make better informed decisions about their health care. Aetna offers a broad range of traditional and consumer-directed health insurance products and related services, including medical, pharmacy, dental, behavioral health, group life and disability plans, and medical management capabilities and health care management services for Medicaid plans. Our customers include employer groups, individuals, college students, part-time and hourly workers, health plans, government-sponsored plans and expatriates. www.aetna.com

The Leapfrog Group (www.leapfroggroup.org)

On behalf of the millions of Americans for whom many of the nation's largest corporations and public agencies buy health benefits, The Leapfrog Group aims to use its members' collective leverage to initiate breakthrough improvements in the safety, quality, and affordability of health care for Americans. The Leapfrog Group was founded in November 2000 by the Business Roundtable and is supported by its members, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Commonwealth Fund, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and other sources.

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