

**West Jefferson Medical Center  
Designated Blue Distinction® Center for Maternity Care**

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**(February 29, 2016 – Marrero, LA)** – In an effort to help prospective parents find hospitals that deliver quality maternity care, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana announced that [West Jefferson Medical Center](#) (WJMC) has been designated as one of the first hospitals to receive the national Blue Distinction® Center+ for Maternity Care designation, a new designation under the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program.

Nearly four million babies are born in the U.S. annually, making childbirth the most common cause of hospitalization. This new Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care program evaluates hospitals on several quality measures, including the percentage of newborns that fall into the category of early elective delivery, an ongoing concern in the medical community. Compared with babies born 39 weeks or later, early term infants face higher risks of infant death and respiratory ailments such as respiratory distress syndrome, pneumonia, and respiratory failure, among other conditions. These babies also have a higher rate of admission to Neonatal Intensive Care Units.

In addition, hospitals that receive a Blue Distinction Center for Maternity Care designation agreed to meet requirements that align with principles that support evidence-based practices of care, as well as having initiated programs to promote successful breastfeeding, as described in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative by Baby-Friendly USA or the Mother-Friendly Hospital program by the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) through its "Ten Steps of Mother-Friendly Care." The program also evaluates hospitals on overall patient satisfaction, including a willingness to recommend the hospital to others.

Blue Distinction Centers and Blue Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care, an expansion of the national Blue Distinction® Specialty Care program, are hospitals recognized for delivering quality specialty care safely and effectively, based on objective measures developed with input from the medical community. To receive a Blue

Distinction Centers+ for Maternity Care designation, a hospital must meet the same quality criteria as Blue Distinction Centers while also meeting requirements for cost efficiency.

“At West Jefferson Medical Center’s Family Birth Place we understand what a privilege it is to provide healthcare for a family during one of the most important times of their lives, the birth of a child, “ said Nancy R. Cassagne. “Each day our goal is to ensure every patient receives both outstanding clinical care as well as a rewarding and memorable birth experience. Because of our hospital’s commitment to the community we serve, we are truly honored to receive the Blue Distinction Center for Maternity Care designation. This recognition is yet another confirmation that at WJMC, healthcare is about our family caring for your family.”

“We congratulate West Jefferson Medical Center on this accomplishment,” says Paul Murphree, D.O., interim chief medical officer at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana. “Meeting the strenuous criteria required of this new designation is a testament to its commitment to the health of its community. We applaud the hospital’s efforts in helping our mutual customers receive the highest quality maternity care.”

Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) companies across the nation have recognized more than 280 hospitals as Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care. Hospitals recognized for these designations were assessed using a combination of publicly available quality information and cost measures derived from BCBS companies’ medical claims.

Since 2006, the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality providers for their specialty care needs in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacements, spine surgery and transplants. Research shows that compared to other facilities, those designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate better quality and improved outcomes for patients.

For more information about the program, visit [www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction](http://www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction).

***About West Jefferson Medical Center***

*Founded in 1956, [West Jefferson Medical Center](http://www.wjmc.com) (WJMC) is a 435-bed community hospital located in Marrero, La. As a full service medical center, WJMC offers comprehensive programs for preventive, emergency, acute and rehabilitative care with a medical staff of more than 400 physicians and a complement of 1,700 employees and many volunteers. The medical center enjoys national awards for clinical excellence across many of its subspecialties. WJMC is a proud member of LCMC Health, a Louisiana-based, not-for-profit hospital system serving the healthcare needs of the Gulf Coast region. LCMC Health currently manages award-winning community hospitals including Children’s Hospital, Touro, New Orleans East Hospital, University Medical Center New Orleans and West Jefferson Medical Center.*

***About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana***

*Founded in New Orleans in 1934, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is a tax-paying nonprofit health insurer. We are a private company, mutually owned by our policyholders, with an independent Louisiana Board of Directors and no shareholders. We are an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.*

*Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is committed to improving the health and lives of all Louisianians. With our subsidiaries, HMO Louisiana and Southern National Life, we provide group and individual health insurance plans, life and disability insurance, group voluntary products and administrative services to one out of four Louisiana residents. We're the only Louisiana insurer that offers plans in every parish. We also provide every customer with comprehensive wellness education, programs and services to help them live healthier lives. Headquartered in Baton Rouge, we have eight regional offices to serve our customers around the state.*

*Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana is dedicated to transforming the healthcare industry in Louisiana into one that delivers high-quality health outcomes for our customers with top-notch service at more affordable costs. Our reputation for exceptional service and prompt payments, as well as the hard work of our 200+ in-house doctors, nurses, pharmacists, social workers and dietitians, keeps both customer and provider satisfaction high. Surveys by the Louisiana State Medical Society and the Louisiana Hospital Association consistently rank Blue Cross the best company providers do business with.*

*Blue Cross is deeply committed to the communities we serve. We invest both time and money in the health and wellbeing of Louisiana children by supporting more than 200 charitable organizations. We invite and encourage all Louisianians to visit our website at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com) or talk to us on social media through our online hub at [www.bcbsla.com/social/](http://www.bcbsla.com/social/).*

#### **About 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 nearly 105 million members – one in three Americans. For more information on the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association and its member companies, please visit [bcbs.com](http://bcbs.com). We encourage you to connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and check out [The BCBS Blog](#), for up-to-date information about BCBSA.*

#### **About Blue Distinction Centers**

*Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures for patient safety and outcomes, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for facilities 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 health care. Each facility's cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Facilities 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 [bcbs.com](http://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 non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.*