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**Berkshire Health Systems and Canyon Ranch Institute Announce Partnership
to Improve Health and Wellness with the Berkshire Community**

*New initiative focuses on advancing health literacy, improving prevention and
eliminating health disparities*

PITTSFIELD, MA (June 26, 2013) – Berkshire Health Systems (BHS) today announced an initiative to improve the health and wellness of the Berkshire community with its new partner, the non-profit Canyon Ranch Institute (CRI). BHS will invest a combined \$500,000 in funding and support for professional staff time to establish the most comprehensive initiative to date to bring the Canyon Ranch Institute Life Enhancement Program (CRI LEP) to a community. The CRI Life Enhancement Program with BHS is an evidence-based, multidisciplinary program that transfers the best practices of Canyon Ranch, through BHS health professionals, to underserved members of the Berkshire community to prevent, diagnose and address chronic diseases. The CRI Life Enhancement Program uses the integrative health approach to advance health literacy and improve health outcomes through physical activity, healthy nutrition, positive behavior change, and stress management techniques.

Berkshire Health Systems is committed to delivering the best-quality healthcare in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, and has been recognized nationally for excellence in clinical care across a wide spectrum of specialties. BHS has a proven history of developing comprehensive community health and wellness programs, including Wellness at Work, which is used by BHS and several other local companies, to provide highly effective prevention and wellness services for employees. In addition, BHS provides a strong network of outreach services in the community, including health screenings, collaborations with community agencies and health education programs.

“The health improvement and participant results that Canyon Ranch Institute has achieved with its partners in other parts of the country are extraordinary,” said **David E. Phelps**, President and CEO of Berkshire Health Systems. “While the CRI Life Enhancement Program is targeted toward some of the neediest members of our community, we expect the knowledge, skills and experience to influence our overall healthcare delivery and programming as well, with our team members incorporating the principles they learn into all of their interactions with our patients and our community.”

“The Canyon Ranch Institute Life Enhancement Program is a proven model to promote health and wellness that is replicable and sustainable. This program has positive effects in urban centers and rural communities,” said **Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS**, 17th Surgeon General of the United States and President of Canyon Ranch Institute. “The leaders of Berkshire Health Systems understand that our nation can have the best science and the best systems of care, but if we’re not reaching the people who are most in need, then we still need to improve.”

The most recent *Berkshire County Community Health Assessment* report shows that the Berkshire community faces many health challenges affecting the overall health, wellness, productivity and quality of life of its residents.

“The Canyon Ranch Institute Life Enhancement Program isn’t just about making a positive difference in the lives of the program’s participants. Evidence shows that the CRI LEP’s positive health effects extend into families, communities and healthcare systems,” said **Jennifer Cabe, M.A.**, Executive Director and Board Member, Canyon Ranch Institute. “All of us at Canyon Ranch Institute are proud to partner with Berkshire Health Systems because BHS supports the health and wellness of its community, including low-income and traditionally medically underserved residents who have the highest rates of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, depression, and heart disease.”

Although Canyon Ranch Institute Life Enhancement Program partnerships share a common set of core foundational and program elements, each CRI LEP site is unique and adapted to meet the cultural, geographic, linguistic and health realities of each community.

Through this partnership with Canyon Ranch Institute, BHS professionals, representing all aspects of the integrative health model – physicians, physician assistants, nurses, exercise professionals, nutritionists, behavioral health specialists, community health educators, and others – are participating in a specialized education program designed by CRI, and will implement the best practices they have learned to measurably and scientifically improve individual and community health and wellness.

Canyon Ranch Institute has started training the BHS health and wellness professionals who will deliver the CRI LEP to the Berkshire community. The program is scheduled to launch in September 2013 with community participants from the BHS patient population.

About Berkshire Health Systems

Berkshire Health Systems (BHS) is the leading provider of comprehensive healthcare services to residents of and visitors to Berkshire County, Massachusetts, and the surrounding region. With award-winning programs, nationally-recognized physicians, world-class technology and a sincere commitment to the community, BHS is delivering the kind of advanced healthcare most commonly found in large metropolitan centers. A private, not-for-profit organization, BHS serves the region through a network of affiliates which include Berkshire Medical Center, ranked by HealthGrades as a Top 5% in the Nation hospital, Fairview Hospital, named by the Leapfrog Group as a Top US Rural Hospital, the Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association, BMC and Fairview physician practices, and long-term care associate Berkshire Healthcare Systems. Each of these organizations is distinguished by the high quality of their programs and services, and by the credentials, skill and compassion of their physicians, nurses and caregivers. More information is available at www.berkshirehealthsystems.org.

About Canyon Ranch Institute®

Canyon Ranch Institute (CRI) is a non-profit organization that catalyzes the possibility of optimal health for all people by translating the best practices of Canyon Ranch and our partners to help educate, inspire, and empower every person to prevent disease and embrace a life of wellness. Canyon Ranch Institute and our partners believe in the power and possibility of a healthy world. More information is available at www.canyonranchinstitute.org.

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