

## March 22, 2006 Grand opening of Conemaugh Diabetes Institute highlighting UPMC & Conemaugh Health System community partnership

For Immediate Release

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Johnstown, PA - Congressman John P. Murtha joined administrators from Conemaugh Health System's Memorial Medical Center, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh Diabetes Institute (UPDI) to mark the grand opening of the new Conemaugh Diabetes Institute, located at Memorial Medical Center's Downtown Campus.

"Diabetes has emerged as one of the most serious health problems in Pennsylvania, particularly in rural areas," said Congressman Murtha. "Working together, leaders from the University of Pittsburgh Diabetes Institute, the Conemaugh Health System and other community partners will create systems to improve outcomes for people in this region who are living with diabetes and for those at high risk for developing diabetes. It is our expectation that in the future these initiatives will serve as models that can be replicated throughout the United States and applied to our military."

In Cambria, Somerset and Bedford counties alone, more than 13,000 people have been diagnosed with diabetes. The Institute, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, will take a comprehensive approach to managing diabetes, incorporating prevention, education, treatment and research initiatives. Some of the various programs offered at the Institute will include:

- Diabetes Self Management Education (DSME) classes
  
- Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)
  
- Healthy Lifestyles Program
  
- Diabetes Support Group
  
- Mount Aloysius/Memorial Medical Center Diabetes Foot Study
  
- Gestational Diabetes care
  
- One-On-One Education

"With the tremendous support of Congressman Murtha and the new community partnership forged with UPMC, those affected by diabetes can now get comprehensive care close to home," says Scott Becker, CEO, Conemaugh Health System. "We are very excited to see the kind of positive impact the Conemaugh Diabetes Institute will have not only on those already diagnosed with the disease, but our goal is also to educate those at risk for diabetes, in an effort to stop the disease before it starts."

"The diabetes epidemic creates challenges that require a comprehensive approach to prevention and treatment," said Linda Siminerio, PhD, Director, UPDI. "To be effective in the fight against diabetes, team work and partnerships are critical. The job is too big and complex to handle it alone. The Conemaugh Diabetes Institute is a prime example of how the collaboration of two entities such as the University of Pittsburgh Diabetes Institute and the Conemaugh Health System can build a bridge to bring the latest research, cutting edge treatments and quality care to a community in need."

One of the missions of the community partnership is to create a system to monitor and support the needs of people affected by diabetes. To accomplish this goal, UPMC's community partners such as Memorial Medical Center's Conemaugh Diabetes Institute, Uniontown Hospital, Highlands Hospital and Indiana Regional Medical Center will track diabetes information.

Eight percent of Pennsylvanians-1.1 million people\* have diabetes, and experts estimate that 1.5 million new cases are diagnosed each year in the United States. In fact, newly released statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) note that the incidence of diabetes has increased by more than 14 percent in the past two years. Diabetes accounts for about \$7.7 billion in total health care costs every year in Pennsylvania-and \$132 billion nationwide. Nationally, diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death, according to the American Diabetes Association. In Pennsylvania more than 11,500 people die each year from the disease. Diabetes is also the leading cause of new blindness, end-stage renal disease and non-traumatic amputations in Pennsylvania.

\*720,500 diagnosed and 379,500 undiagnosed