Support of Global Medical Manufacturer Will Advance Women's Health Services in Navajo Nation

The Associated Press

TUBA CITY, Ariz.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Mar 9, 2012-- Tuba City Regional Health Care announced that a new phase in a strategic partnership with KARL STORZ, a global manufacturer of advanced medical equipment, will begin with a ceremony at the hospital on Friday, March 9, 2012, to mark the presentation of state-of-the-art endoscopic instrumentation and related equipment for performing advanced gynecologic procedures as well as addressing other women's health issues. The relationship between the hospital and the family-owned company based in Germany is focused on enabling the Arizona facility to acquire much-needed equipment to enhance the care provided to its patients across a range of medical specialties. This donation follows an initial gift of advanced life-saving equipment made to the hospital late in 2011.

The donation project began last year with an outreach and meetings that resulted in a relationship with Congressman Paul Gosar, a first-term Congressman from Flagstaff, Arizona. A dentist by profession, Congressman Gosar has a particular interest in initiatives for reforming healthcare and expanding job opportunities in his district. As a member of the Indian Affairs subcommittee, he is also highly engaged in establishing greater sovereignty for Native Americans. As such, he was instrumental in bringing the needs of Tuba

City Regional Health Care to the attention of KARL STORZ.

Jack A. Frydrych, Member, Global Executive Committee, KARL STORZ, explained, "Recently, a decision was made by Dr. h. c. mult. Sybill Storz to undertake a series of transformative projects of high impact to meaningfully increase access to quality healthcare, while lowering costs, in a Native American community that has a challenging infrastructure (such as a large land mass, unimproved roads and minimal public utility delivery), lack of significant sources of revenue, has a hospital that is tribally run, and has the support and encouragement of administration, medical staff, and tribal leadership to collaboratively undertake and sustain programs to provide access to advanced medical procedures as a center of excellence in Native American communities, notwithstanding the revenue and infrastructure challenges. Through the introduction of Congressmen Bill Cassidy, MD, of Louisiana, an association developed with Congressman Paul Gosar and his staff, who enthusiastically undertook the role and responsibility of connecting us to Tuba City Regional Health Care and encouraged us to evaluate it as the site for our project. We found that Tuba City Regional Health Care and the Navajo/Hopi Nations met our criteria."

Initial onsite meetings helped in determining the most pressing needs of the hospital and surgeons. Because of limited funding available, Tuba City Regional Health Care is severely under-resourced, with limited to no funding sources available to purchase much-needed equipment. The hospital was overjoyed at the possibility of working with KARL STORZ on a "true" partnership. The hospital's commitment to

the project has reinforced the interest of KARL STORZ in supporting transformational change for the hospital and the Navajo Nation, and not in merely donating a "piece of equipment."

According to Congressman Gosar, programs such as the one at Tuba City Regional Health Care help demonstrate the progressive nature of healthcare in the Navajo community and where it can lead. "I am proud to have been a part of this unique partnership. The philanthropic giving of KARL STORZ will empower Arizona native tribes to pursue excellence in healthcare. The donations of KARL STORZ will impact the day-to-day lives of many throughout the region, improving access and the quality of care. I hope that this exceptional partnership encourages other companies to consider how their investment can also change the future of healthcare for communities in need. I thank all who came together to be a part of this exceptional initiative," he said.

The first equipment donation was a C-MAC(R) Video Intubation System that has helped the hospital deal with difficult airway cases daily and address concerns with patient safety issues.

The current stage of the partnership program now addresses the hospital's strong commitment to developing its minimally invasive surgical techniques in gynecology. The hospital's vision is to become a regional center of excellence, providing advanced laparoscopic surgery to women from all of the reservations in the Southwest. More specifically, an additional aim of the hospital is to create a Women's

Health Center at Tuba City Regional Health Care that will function as a center of knowledge and serve as a training site where surgeons can improve their skills and master new techniques. The two current gynecologic surgeons at Tuba City Regional Health Care are expert in laparoscopic hysterectomies and laparoscopic surgery for pelvic organ prolapse. By comparison, less than one-third of hysteroscopies in the United States are performed minimally invasively.

The laparoscopic gynecology equipment being provided to the Tuba City Regional Health Care includes small diameter operating hysteroscopes and instrumentation, and other specialized telescopes and instrument sets and equipment representing a range of innovative technologies for performing minimally invasive procedures. Adult cystoscopy instruments and telescopes are also being provided, as well as the company's Image 1(R) high-definition (HD) video technology that provides laparoscopic video and images representing the highest imaging standards in the medical field. The system also includes an AIDA HD Connect with SmartScreen and peripheral equipment for copying, archiving, printing and reviewing HD images and videos. This offers a critical capability for the surgical staff at Tuba City Regional Health Care to support education and training physicians in advanced surgical techniques.

"The majority of our patients live with extreme poverty, many times with limited running water and electricity. The ability for them to access high level healthcare without having to go hundreds of miles for care is a major step forward. It's critical for their health and welfare to have a first-class medical facility. We are grateful to

KARL STORZ for their commitment to women's health worldwide," said Jennifer Whitehair, MD, FACOG, Department of OB/GYN, Tuba City Regional Health Care.

The medical staff of Tuba City Regional Health Care is setting a high standard for innovative medical care, an achievement that is distinctive among the Indian nations. They are proving that, despite hard living conditions and extreme poverty, a high level of advanced medical care can be provided to the local communities.

This emphasizes a critical aspect of the project: that the advances represented in the new procedures and new technologies available will not only help patients on the Navajo lands, but will also provide invaluable support for the training and education of other healthcare providers outside of the Navajo Nation, such as at the University of Arizona.

The donation program with Tuba City Regional Health Care is a reflection of the social and ethical values that have long been an integral part of the KARL STORZ business culture. A primary objective has been to support worldwide training activities to enable doctors to carry out minimally invasive interventions. "Beyond our core competencies of being an innovation and quality leader in providing endoscopic product solutions it is our tradition to actively support medical training. With this effort, we especially focus on hospitals and healthcare centers that need this support in order to advance the usage of minimally invasive techniques for a better care and

well-being of patients. Therefore, we very much appreciate this intensive dialog and exchange with the Tuba City Health Care Corporation and we are glad that physicians and patients will benefit from the endoscopic equipment of KARL STORZ," explained Dr. h. c. mult. Sybill Storz, one of the owners and CEO of the KARL STORZ group.

Dr. Storz and the global KARL STORZ organization have supported numerous humanitarian projects throughout the world. Each project was aimed at improving medical care and training in underdeveloped countries and in regions with less developed infrastructure.

Additionally, the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) of Dr. Storz has sought to improve reproductive and maternal health for women and girls in India. Considered a remarkably successful project since its launch in 2005, the WHI has two major objectives: offering medical training to local doctors in India, and creating this training to improve access to gynecological treatment for women and girls, particularly in India's remote regions. With ongoing support of Dr. Storz, projects have been supported around the globe, from Afghanistan, Armenia, Bolivia, Botswana, Cambodia and Gabon, to Ecuador, Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria and Vietnam, among many others.

Looking forward, the global KARL STORZ organization is continuing to work collaboratively on future projects with the administration and medical staff of Tuba City Regional Health Care, as well as the leadership of the Navajo community.

ABOUT TUBA CITY REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Tuba City Regional Hospital is a 73-bed, regional acute care facility

with three operating rooms and one endoscopy room. The hospital provides hundreds of clinical and patient care support services spanning the medical spectrum, including total hip and joint replacement surgery and emergency room trauma care. It serves a geographic area of over 6,000 square miles in the western region of the Navajo reservation and adjacent Hopi reservation for the more than 75,000 residents throughout this service area.

Tuba City Regional Hospital is the only place within the entire reservation where total hip and joint replacements are performed by board certified orthopedic surgeons. Tuba City Regional Hospital also offers certified diabetic care, selective general surgery services and specialty care services not typically found at other tribal hospitals.

Since September 2002, the Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation (TCRHCC), a private nonprofit tribal organization, has run the hospital under a Self-Determination Contract in lieu of the Indian Health Service. This status gives TCRHCC greater autonomy and flexibility to pursue present and future opportunities beyond its limited federal funding.

ABOUT KARL STORZ

KARL STORZ GmbH & Co. KG is a privately held family-owned business, founded in 1945 by Dr. med. h. c. Karl Storz in Tuttlingen, Germany, which remains the global headquarters. After the death of Dr. Karl Storz in 1996, his daughter Dr. h. c. mult. Sybill Storz assumed management as chief executive of the KARL STORZ group. The company

operates worldwide, with 46 subsidiaries in 38 countries, including

multiple research and development and manufacturing sites in Europe

and in the U.S., with more than 2,000 employees in its U.S.

subsidiaries. For more information, visit the company's Web site at

www.karlstorz.com.

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