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Premier Inc. wins Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, nation's top honor for performance excellence

Healthcare alliance recognized for excellence in improving patient outcomes while safely reducing the cost of care

SAN DIEGO (November 21, 2006) — President George W. Bush and Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez today named the Premier Inc. healthcare alliance the only U.S. service company to win the 2006 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA).

The award, given by the U.S. Department of Commerce, is the nation's highest Presidential honor awarded to organizations for quality and organizational performance excellence.

“President Bush and I applaud the three 2006 recipients of the prestigious Baldrige Award. With their innovative practices, commitment to excellence and outstanding results, these organizations are among America's best and are role models for any organization striving for world-class performance,” Secretary Gutierrez said in announcing the winners. “The Baldrige Award has grown in stature and is respected and emulated around the world.”

Each year, the Commerce Department recognizes up to three organizations in each of the following categories: education, healthcare, manufacturing, service and small business. The award is traditionally presented by the president of the United States. Of the 76 organizations that applied for the 2006 Award, only three won: Premier; MESA Products, Inc. of Tulsa, Okla.; and North Mississippi Medical Center of Tupelo, Miss.

“This award is a tribute not only to our employees, but also to the commitment of our member hospitals across the nation,” said Richard A. Norling, president and CEO of Premier Inc. “These far-sighted community hospitals created Premier as a way to work together to continuously improve patient outcomes while safely reducing the cost of care.



“With our member hospitals, everyone at Premier shares a desire to transform American healthcare into the best, safest, most effective system in the world,” Norling said. “Our staff deserves tremendous recognition for their dedication to this effort and their embrace of the principles of continuous improvement embodied by the Baldrige criteria.”

Throughout the world, the Baldrige criteria are acknowledged as the standard for performance excellence. Organizations striving for excellence measure their efforts in seven areas: leadership; strategic planning; customer and market focus; measurement, analysis and knowledge management; human resources; process management; and results. Baldrige winners demonstrate increased market share, greater customer satisfaction, improved employee relations and enhanced operating performance.

Congress established the MBNQA in 1987 to recognize U.S. organizations for their achievements in quality and business performance and to raise awareness about the importance of quality and performance as a competitive edge. The U.S. Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) manages the Baldrige National Quality Program.

Premier was one of only 15 organizations in the country during 2006 to receive a site visit by a group of Malcolm Baldrige National Quality examiners. Examiners visited Premier's Charlotte and San Diego offices in October and held comprehensive interviews with hundreds of employees in these offices and with Premier's field force. For more information on Premier Inc. and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, please visit www.premierinc.com/baldrige or the NIST Web site at www.nist.gov.

About Premier Inc.

Serving 1,700 hospitals and 42,000 other healthcare sites, Premier Inc. is the largest healthcare alliance in the United States dedicated to improving patient outcomes while safely reducing the cost of care. Owned by not-for-profit hospitals, Premier operates the nation's largest healthcare purchasing network, the most comprehensive repository of hospital clinical and financial information and one of the largest policy-holder owned, professional liability insurance companies in healthcare. Headquartered in San Diego, Premier has offices in Charlotte, N.C. and Washington, D.C. For more information, visit www.premierinc.com.

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