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**PHOENIX CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ENDORSES
REGENT'S PLAN FOR ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER**

PHOENIX, Ariz. (December 22, 2006) -- Phoenix Children's Hospital today announced its endorsement of the Arizona Board of Regents' comprehensive plan for an Academic Health Center in downtown Phoenix.

In a December 19th letter to members of the hospital and health care community, the Board of Regents outlined their plan in which a comprehensive Academic Health Center would be created with the goal of "... more and better health care for the citizens of Arizona and more physicians to serve the State's escalating need." The Center would be developed adjacent to the Phoenix Biomedical Campus, and include a teaching hospital operated by Banner in conjunction with the University of Arizona College of Medicine. The letter also describes the development of a strong academic relationship between the University and the Maricopa Integrated Health System, in which Graduate Medical Education programs would be integrated with the College of Medicine and Banner, to create a stronger and expanded teaching program.

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“As stewards of the public trust, Phoenix Children’s Hospital has a long history of supporting public policy initiatives that help build the medical, educational, and research infrastructure of our rapidly growing state,” said Robert Meyer, president and CEO of Phoenix Children’s. “We agree with the Regents that this plan will result in an increase in the quality and quantity of physicians practicing in Arizona and residents training here, as well as create a coordinated statewide clinical research enterprise.”

Phoenix Children’s Hospital’s current collaboration partners include Banner Good Samaritan, Mayo Clinic Scottsdale, T-Gen, Scottsdale Healthcare, Maricopa Integrated Health System, and many of the Valley’s top pediatricians. The hospital is in the third year of a 20-year agreement with Banner Good Samaritan to provide the pediatric component of Banner’s residency training.

Meyer says that Phoenix Children’s has been and will continue to be a key component of the University of Arizona Medical School, providing pediatric clerkship and residency rotations and teaching faculty. Phoenix Children’s also operates a joint pediatric residency program with Maricopa Integrated Health System. “These types of collaborations will continue to be necessary for the College of Medicine in Phoenix to excel, which is our vision” he noted.

Phoenix Children’s plays an important role in the long-term success of the state’s health care vision, notes Meyer.

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"A vision of this magnitude requires that we bring our various strengths together for the good of our community," said Meyer. "It makes sense that Phoenix Children's participate by providing the unique, focused training program that only a specialty children's hospital can offer."