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For Immediate Release

South Texas Spine & Surgical Hospital in San Antonio Earns Blue Distinction® Center+

Designation for Quality and Cost-Efficiency in Spine Surgery

(San Antonio, Texas – September 14, 2021) BlueCross BlueShield of Texas has selected South Texas Spine & Surgical Hospital (STSSH) in San Antonio as a Blue Distinction Center+ for Spine Surgery, as part of the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program. Blue Distinction Centers are nationally designated healthcare facilities shown to deliver improved patient safety and better health outcomes, based on objective measures that were developed by Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies with input from the medical community.

Spinal surgeries are among the most common and expensive elective surgeries in the U.S., according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), which creates a significant opportunity to improve quality and value within the healthcare system. For example, there were more than 465,000 spinal fusion operations in the U.S. in 2011, and hospital costs for a fusion procedure average \$27,5681 according to AHRQ.

Hospitals designated as Blue Distinction Centers+ for Spine Surgery demonstrate expertise in cervical and lumbar fusion, cervical laminectomy and lumbar laminectomy/discectomy procedures, resulting in fewer patient complications and hospital readmissions compared to other hospitals. Designated hospitals must also maintain national accreditation. In addition to meeting these quality thresholds, facilities designated as Blue Distinction Centers+ are on average 20 percent more cost-efficient in an episode of care compared to other hospitals.

“Quality is key, only those facilities that first meet nationally established, objective quality measures are considered for designation as a Blue Distinction Center+. The physicians and staff at South Texas Spine & Surgical Hospital are proud to be recognized by BlueCross BlueShield of Texas for meeting the rigorous selection criteria for spine surgery set by the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program,” stated Joel Jenne, MD, Chief of Staff at STSSH.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide healthcare coverage for nearly 105 million members – one-in-three Americans. For more information on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association and its member companies, please visit bcbs.com. We encourage you to connect with us on Facebook, check out our videos on YouTube, follow us on Twitter and check out The BCBS Blog, for up-to-date information about BCBSA.

About Blue Distinction Centers

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures for patient safety and outcomes, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for facilities located in its own service area; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers' need for affordable health care. Each facility's cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Facilities in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans' areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on bcbs.com. Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other provide

About South Texas Spine & Surgical Hospital

Surgery Partners has partnered with local physicians to establish South Texas Spine & Surgical Hospital (STSSH). In this partnership, the physicians assist in management of the hospital, resulting in a hospital solely run for the benefit of the patient. This innovative approach creates an integrated and holistic approach to healthcare. As a nationally recognized center for spine and joint care excellence, STSSH takes pride in providing the highest quality clinical care in a one-on-one, warm and caring environment. For additional information, please visit www.southtexassurgical.com, follow us on Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn or like us on Facebook.

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