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**The Surgery Center at Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery Earns Blue Distinction® Center+ Designation for Quality and Cost-Efficiency in Spine Surgery**

**Columbia, S.C.** –BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina has selected The Surgery Center at Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery 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. The Surgery Center is the first Ambulatory Surgery Center in South Carolina to receive the designation.

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 \$27,568<sup>1</sup> according to AHRQ.

Free Standing Surgery Centers 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 Free Standing Surgery Center readmissions compared to other Free Standing Surgery Centers. Designated Free Standing Surgery Centers 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 Free Standing Surgery Centers.

Quality is key: only those facilities that first meet nationally established, objective quality measures will be considered for designation as a Blue Distinction Center+.

The Surgery Center at Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery is proud to be recognized by BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina for meeting the rigorous selection criteria for spine surgery set by the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program.

“Providing our community with the highest outpatient spine care available is our primary objective”, said Janet Carlson, The Surgery Center at Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery’s Chief Executive Officer. “Our entire organization is fully committed to providing the best care and patient experience possible. Being selected as a Blue Distinction Center+ for spine surgery is an honor and a challenge. Being one of the select few to receive this designation reinforces our unrelenting pursuit of excellence and patient well-being.”

Since 2006, the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality providers for their specialty care needs in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacements, maternity care, spine surgery, and transplants, while encouraging healthcare professionals to improve the care they deliver.

“Our Blue Distinction program recognizes Free Standing Surgery Centers that demonstrate higher levels of performance and quality in providing better specialty care,” said BlueCross Vice President and Chief Medical Officer Shawn Stinson, M.D. “Improving quality of care is integral to transforming the healthcare system to improve outcomes, reduce cost and enhance patient experience. It’s a rigorous process to meet all the metrics required by Blue Distinction. We congratulate The Surgery Center at Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery for achieving this very distinguished designation and meeting consumers’ need for affordable care.”

For more information about the program and for a complete listing of the designated facilities, please visit [www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction](http://www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction).

<sup>1</sup>[Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#)

### **About The Surgery Center @ Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery**

The Surgery Center at Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery is a freestanding ambulatory surgery center providing a full spectrum of care. Together with Surgical Care Affiliates (SCA), their vision is to be the practice of choice for outpatient spine and orthopaedic procedures. Experienced physicians, nurses, and technicians use advanced technology and equipment to provide high quality, care in a warm, personalized setting.

The Surgery Center at Midlands Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery is accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC), and strives to provide the best care possible by meeting and exceeding AAAHC standards for high-quality healthcare.

### **About BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina**

Headquartered in Columbia and operating in South Carolina for nearly 70 years, BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. The only South Carolina-owned and operated health insurance carrier, BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina comprises more than 20 companies involved in health insurance services, U.S. DoD health program and Medicare contracts, other insurance and employee benefits services, and a philanthropic foundation that funds programs to improve health care and access to health care for South Carolinians.

### **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](http://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](http://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 providers.*