CLEARWATER, Fl, December 20, 2010– The collaboration between Morton Plant Mease Health Care and Suncoast Hospice to offer training in the provision of spiritual care to patients and their families has been recognized with full accreditation from the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). “We are honored that our strong partnership with Suncoast Hospice has been fully accredited and that we continue to offer spiritual and emotional care to our patients we serve together,” noted Rev. Connie Bonner, BCC, certified ACPE supervisor at Morton Plant Mease and manager of the CPE program.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is interfaith professional education for ministry in a health care setting. The partnership brings theological students and ministers of all faith traditions together for education courses which include supervised encounters of bedside visits with patients in a hospital or hospice setting. With intense involvement and insight from peers and teachers, the students develop a deeper understanding of those who are in need and how best to offer spiritual care in a health care environment. Students selected for the program serve internships or one year residencies at the hospitals of Morton Plant Mease or within hospice houses and teams operated by Suncoast Hospice. CPE training is required for chaplain board certification. A total of 58 students have been part of the CPE program since it started in October 2007.

“The CPE partnership started as a candidacy center and the program is a one-of-a-kind partnership between a hospital system and a hospice,” says Timothy Arsenault, MA, director of spiritual care at Suncoast Hospice. “CPE accreditation is equated as the gold standard for clinical pastoral education training programs in health care and we are so proud of this significant milestone.”

For more information on the CPE program, visit www.mpmhealth.com and keyword search: CPE Program.

About Suncoast Hospice

Suncoast Hospice is the nation's largest not-for-profit, community-based provider of hospice and palliative care. The Hospice provides care for tens of thousands of people annually, and leads innovative service delivery, social change advocacy, technology development and other end-of-life initiatives.

About Morton Plant Mease

Nationally recognized for health care excellence, Morton Plant Mease Health Care is dedicated to providing community owned health care services that set the standard for
high-quality, compassionate care. Morton Plant Mease Health Care is comprised of the following hospitals – Morton Plant, Clearwater; Mease Dunedin, Dunedin; Mease Countryside, Safety Harbor and Morton Plant North Bay, New Port Richey. For more information on Morton Plant Mease, call (727) 953-6877.

About BayCare Health System

BayCare Health System is a leading community-based health system in the Tampa Bay area. Composed of a network of 10 not-for-profit hospitals, outpatient facilities and services such as imaging, lab, behavioral health and home health care, BayCare provides expert medical care throughout a patient’s lifetime. With more than 195 access points conveniently located throughout Tampa Bay, BayCare connects patients to a complete range of preventive, diagnostic and treatment services for any health care need.

BayCare’s family of hospitals are: Mease Countryside, Mease Dunedin, Morton Plant, Morton Plant North Bay, St. Anthony’s, St. Joseph’s, St. Joseph’s Children’s, St. Joseph’s Hospital-North, St. Joseph’s Women’s, and South Florida Baptist. For more information, visit BayCare on the Web at www.BayCare.org.

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