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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AMMC'S 10th ANNUAL WOMEN'S HEALTH FAIR DRAWS
NEARLY 900 ATTENDEES**

Community Event Educates Women on Breast Cancer and Early Detection

PARAGOULD, Ark., Arkansas Methodist Medical Center (AMMC) held its 10th annual women's health fair at the medical center on Thursday, October 25th, drawing nearly 900 attendees from Paragould and surrounding communities.

As October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, this year's "Hat's Off to Good Health" event placed special emphasis on educating women in the community about the importance of early detection in treating and curing breast cancer. AMMC conducted free, private, physician and nurse practitioner led classes teaching attendees breast self-examination techniques.

"Women see themselves every day. As physicians, we're lucky to see them once a year in our office, so breast self-exams are very important," Dr. Paul Becton, AMMC OB/GYN said. "Women should do a self-exam once a month and know what changes to report to their physician."

According to the national Centers for Disease Control (CDC), breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer, and the second leading cause of cancer-related death among women in the United States. While these statistics are quite sobering, early detection offers tremendous hope. In addition to self-exams, the CDC estimates that early detection through screening mammograms can reduce mortality from breast cancer by approximately 20-35 percent in women aged 50-69, and approximately 20 percent in women aged 40-49.

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Organizations including the American Medical Association, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Cancer Society support mammography screening beginning at age 40. The U.S. Preventative Services Task Force, an independent private-sector panel of experts in prevention and primary care recommends that women over the age of 40 be screened for breast cancer with a mammogram every 1-2 years.

“The women’s health fair is a very good service that Arkansas Methodist Medical Center provides,” Barbara Harpole an attendee from Delaplaine, Ark., said. “Some women don’t go to the doctor because they can’t afford it. Here they can get information about their health.”

Most health insurance plans will cover the cost of an annual mammogram as part of their wellness benefit package. For additional information about breast cancer or mammograms at AMMC, please call (870) 239-7016.

This year’s community event also offered attendees a wide range of free health screenings for cholesterol, blood glucose, blood pressure, lung function and nutrition.

Ann Hargrove of Cardwell, Mo., has been attending the health fair for the past three years. “It’s wonderful,” she commented. “I was checked a few years ago at the fair and found out my cholesterol was high. It prompted me to make an appointment with my doctor.”

In addition, the health fair included a luncheon with proceeds benefiting the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, a fashion show, and regional health care and lifestyle exhibitors.

Arkansas Methodist Medical Center is a 129-bed, fully JCAHO accredited, not-for-profit medical center. AMMC has touched thousands of lives since 1949 as a Beacon of Health, Hope and Healing. Additional AMMC information is available at www.arkansasmethodist.org.