Hanger Orthopedic Group, Inc. Selects ABC Accreditation as Standard for Linkia, Its Subsidiary Managed Care Organization

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BETHESDA, Md., Feb 22, 2005 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX/ -- Hanger Orthopedic Group, Inc. (NYSE: HGR) announced today that all orthotics and prosthetics (O&P) facilities contracted by its wholly-owned managed care organization, Linkia, will be required to meet the organizational and clinical facility accreditation standards of The American Board for Certification in Orthotics & Prosthetics, Inc. (ABC). Included are all 632 Hanger Prosthetics and Orthotics patient care centers as well as any independent O&P facilities in the network.

"Currently, little more than half of the nation's O&P facilities are ABC accredited," Hanger Orthopedic Group Chairman and CEO Ivan R. Sabel, CPO said. "In order to fulfill Linkia's mission of providing accountable and differentiated healthcare to our patients, we believe qualification and accreditation of every facility is not just a benefit; it is a necessity."

Accreditation of Linkia provider facilities will begin immediately with all facilities achieving full accreditation by Q1 2007. ABC accreditation is awarded to orthotic and prosthetic facilities following a successful on-site evaluation by an independent surveyor. Facilities are assessed within four standards categories -- patient care, organizational, facility safety, and quality assessment and improvement -- and must employ a minimum of one ABC- certified prosthetist and/or orthotist.

"Linkia's alignment with ABC signifies a big step toward greater clinical accountability in our network," Linkia's Chief Clinical Officer Deanna Fish, CPO said. "The ABC facility accreditation process ensures a quality physical environment as well as a qualified provider for each and every patient. As a result, our contracted payer organizations have confidence in the O&P care provided throughout the Linkia network."

"We are extremely pleased that, through a clinical evaluation process, Linkia has selected the ABC accreditation process as its new standard of care," ABC President William DeToro, CO, FAAOP said. "For a managed care company, requiring ABC accreditation helps guarantee the orthotic and prosthetic facilities have met the most widely used standards of organizational and clinical O&P care. In the absence of national regulation and state licensure laws, this is an extremely important tool in improving patient care."

About Linkia:

A wholly-owned subsidiary of parent company Hanger Orthopedic Group, Inc. (NYSE: HGR), Linkia is the first managed care organization (MCO) dedicated solely to serving the orthotic and prosthetic market. Linkia coordinates and manages all O&P services and needs of its contracted healthcare partners through a customized network of O&P patient care facilities. Linkia's customized network is selected from among independent O&P practices nationwide, as well as from the 600 patient care centers owned and operated by Hanger Prosthetics and Orthotics (HPO), the patient care division of Hanger Orthopedic Group. Linkia's mission is to deliver accountable healthcare services, through a dedication to clinical outcomes, science-based guidelines, and sound medical reasoning. For more information on Linkia, please visit http://www.linkia.com.

About Hanger:

Hanger Orthopedic Group, Inc., headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, is the world's premier provider of orthotic and prosthetic patient care services. Hanger is the market leader in the United States, owning and operating 632 patient care centers in 44 states and the District of Columbia, with 3,385 employees including 1,016 practitioners. Hanger is organized into two business segments: patient care which consists of nationwide orthotic and prosthetic practice centers and distribution which consists of distribution centers managing the supply chain of orthotic and prosthetic componentry to Hanger and third party patient care centers. In addition, Hanger operates the largest orthotic and prosthetic managed care network in the country. For more information on Hanger, please visit http://www.hanger.com.

About The American Board for Certification:

The American Board for Certification in Orthotics & Prosthetics, Inc., is the largest national standards setting organization for providers of orthotic and prosthetic patient care. A non-profit organization founded in 1948, ABC promotes quality O&P patient care through the establishment of nationally recognized individual certification and facility accreditation standards. With over 8,000 professionals credentialed and 1,350 facilities accredited, ABC standards are the benchmarks used by doctors, patients, and managed care organizations for determining qualified providers of orthotic and prosthetic patient care. Further information on ABC is available at http://www.abcop.org.

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