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**University of Chicago Medical Center: Nation's Leader in
Gluten-Free Foodservice**

*Among nation's most comprehensive celiac disease centers, Medical Center takes
lead in serving gluten-free population*

The University of Chicago Medical Center today announced its kitchens are now accredited gluten-free by the Gluten-Free Food Service Accreditation Program, achieving the nation's highest standards for gluten-free foodservice. Patients and visitors who require a gluten-free diet can now enjoy safe gluten-free meals from their hospital bed, and in the food court of the Duchossois Center for Advanced Medicine, at Jazzman's Café in the Knapp Center for Biomedical Discovery and in the Billings Cafeteria.

Approximately three million Americans suffer from celiac disease, the world's most common genetic autoimmune disorder, triggered by the ingestion of gluten—the protein found in wheat, barley and rye. Its only treatment is adherence to a strict, life-long gluten-free diet. Left untreated celiac disease can lead to osteoporosis, thyroid disease and cancer.

“This is a major accomplishment,” remarked Cynthia Kupper, RD, and executive director, Gluten Intolerance Group of North American, which oversees the Gluten-Free Food Service Accreditation Program. “Few have been able to meet and exceed our rigorous standards so quickly, let alone become the standard to be followed.”

“As a center of excellence for Celiac Disease, it is appropriate that those with the disease are able to eat safely when they visit The University of Chicago Medical Center,” said Mark Urquhart, vice president of facilities. “We are going to great lengths, with the help of our partner Sodexo, to make certain our kitchens can safely and consistently provide gluten-free foods that are nutritionally balanced and taste good too.”

Stefano Guandalini, MD, who founded The University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center in 2001, is delighted at this latest development. “Our patients have always received the best care in diagnosing the disease.” Guandalini said. “It is wonderful that we can now participate fully in their treatment as well.”

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The University of Chicago Medical Center, in partnership with Sodexo, is offering a variety of gluten-free foods for inpatient menus, as well as retail sales. While the list of options is sure to expand, it now includes trail mix, snack bars and chocolate bars and cookies from Enjoy Life Natural Brands; french fries and lasagna from Moo Moo's, as well as cheese and sausage pizzas from Marcello's Father & Son Restaurants. For visitors, these and more items can be found in dedicated cases, along with a dedicated preparation station for gluten-free foods.

About the University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center

The University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center is the first of its kind in the country. It has been dedicated to raising awareness and meeting the needs of those affected by the disease nationwide through education, research and advocacy since 2001. The Celiac Disease Center has fundamentally improved the care, diagnosis and awareness of celiac disease. In addition, it provides the infrastructure and support needed to advance cutting-edge celiac research, including investigations into structure of gluten peptides and the mechanisms by which gluten modifies self molecules. The University of Chicago Celiac Disease Center is a 501-c3 non-profit organization, completely funded by donor contributions. For more information please visit:

www.CeliacDisease.net

About the Gluten-Free Food Service Accreditation Program

Gluten-Free Food Service Accreditation Program set the standard for best practices in gluten-free food production for all types of food service operations. The process requires businesses to meet high standards for all aspects of food service that could impact safe gluten-free food production. Critical to the program is quality control through internal and external audits. For more information please visit www.GFFoodService.org

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