MORRISTOWN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL HYPERBARIC UNIT RECEIVES ACCREDITATION
HOSPITAL BECOMES FIRST IN NEW JERSEY WITH DESIGNATION

MORRISTOWN, NJ, April 2007 – Morristown Memorial Hospital’s Hyperbaric Medicine Unit has become the first hyperbaric facility in New Jersey to be accredited by the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society. The accreditation gives patients treated at Morristown Memorial’s hyperbaric unit an independent assurance that they will receive top quality care from a well-run facility, a valuable acknowledgement in a growing field that remains largely without standard regulations.

Patients treated with hyperbaric oxygen therapy receive pure oxygen inside a pressurized chamber. Morristown Memorial’s hyperbaric unit has two hyperbaric chambers that are used primarily for wound care and other conditions, including carbon monoxide poisoning, crush injuries from trauma, healing diabetic wounds and injured tissue from cancer radiation therapy. The hospital’s hyperbaric medicine unit treats more than 100 patients each year, providing about 1,900 treatments annually.

“This accreditation highlights the superior quality of Morristown Memorial Hospital’s hyperbaric program and makes it stand out in a growing field, allowing our patients to know they are in a center of excellence,” said Marilyn Althoff, MD, medical director of the hyperbaric unit at Morristown Memorial. “Our patients are guaranteed to receive the finest quality of care. This validates our commitment to and achievement of the highest standards.”

The Clinical Hyperbaric Facility Accreditation is voluntary, but enhances peer recognition of hyperbaric medicine as a legitimate medical specialty. The objectives of the accreditation are to ensure that such facilities are staffed with well-trained specialists, use quality equipment that has been properly installed, maintained and operated, and provide high quality patient care and safety.

Morristown Memorial’s hyperbaric unit underwent a two-day survey in which the UHMS took an account of everything from the fire protection, installation and maintenance of the unit, to the hospital’s governance and administration to patient relations.

The Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society is a non-profit organization consisting of 2,300 doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals established in 1967. The organization’s goals are to achieve communication, cooperation, education and promotion of quality care for the hyperbaric patient. Hyperbaric facilities in the United States have
multiplied nearly eight times in the last quarter century. Today, there are roughly between 600 and 800 facilities in the nation, according to the UHMS.

While the majority of hyperbaric chambers are located in hospitals or hospital-run facilities, there have been a growing number of privately owned businesses that offer hyperbaric treatment. However, while hospital staff by nature must meet rigorous requirements, there are no nationally mandated requirements for private hyperbaric chamber operators, according to Tom Workman, director of quality assurance and regulatory affairs for the UHMS.

Because it involves using high pressure oxygen, hyperbaric medicine, by nature, requires a great degree of safety. It is the only medical device that has its own dedicated chapter in the National Fire Protection Association’s Standard for Healthcare Facilities, Workman said. In 2002, the UHMS began accrediting hyperbaric facilities to provide a form of standardized regulations.

"The Hyperbaric Medicine Unit of Morristown Memorial Hospital is to be congratulated for achieving a significant milestone," Workman said. "Their recent accreditation by the Undersea & Hyperbaric Medical Society clearly demonstrates a strong commitment to quality care and patient safety for those under their care. Morristown Memorial Hospital joins a very elite group of hospitals that have accredited hyperbaric medicine programs. Only 14 percent of the nation’s hospitals that offer hyperbaric oxygen therapy are so recognized."

Morristown Memorial is the only hyperbaric facility accredited by the UHMS in New Jersey. The next nearest accredited facilities are in Syracuse, N.Y., Brooklyn and Rhode Island.

Atlantic Health’s Overlook Hospital in Summit has a new hyperbaric unit, and will be seeking its own accreditation.

About Morristown Memorial Hospital

Part of the Atlantic Health, (atlantichealth.org), Morristown Memorial is a non-profit 628-licensed-bed hospital in Morristown, NJ. Morristown Memorial’s specialties include cardiology and cardiac surgery, adult and pediatric oncology, critical and emergency care and inpatient rehabilitation and neonatal intensive care services. Morristown Memorial is also a Level II Regional Trauma Center and a Level III Regional Perinatal Center. Home to the largest cardiac surgery center in the state, Morristown’s other services include the Goryeb Children’s Hospital, Carol G. Simon Cancer Center, and North Jersey Regional Arthritis Center. Morristown Memorial is designated as a Magnet Hospital for Excellence in Nursing Service, the highest level of recognition by American Nurses Credentialing Center available to facilities that provide acute care services, and has also been ranked among the top 100 cardiovascular hospitals in the United States.

Atlantic Health also includes Overlook Hospital in Summit and Mountainside Hospital in Montclair. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.