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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PREMIER EXTENDS PARTNERSHIP WITH ASCENT HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS
FOR MEDICAL DEVICE REPROCESSING**

Continued member satisfaction, cost savings and waste reduction prompt new agreement

Phoenix, Ariz. – January 28, 2008 – Premier Inc. (Premier), the largest healthcare alliance in the United States with 1,700 members, has renewed its agreement with Ascent Healthcare Solutions (Ascent), the leading independent reprocessor of single-use medical devices (SUDs). Under the three-year contract extension, Premier members are projected to save \$92 million and eliminate nearly 3 million pounds of medical waste.

With more than 80 510(k)s cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Premier members can safely maximize their savings and environmental stewardship by taking advantage of the broad range of reprocessed cardiovascular, endoscopic/laparoscopic, general surgery/OR, orthopedic/arthroscopic, gastroenterology, respiratory and ophthalmology devices as well as recycling services that Ascent offers. Reprocessed devices typically cost about half as much as purchasing a new device. The resulting savings, which can exceed one million dollars for a large system can be applied to patient programs, clinical staffing, the purchase of new medical technologies or other initiatives proven to enhance patient care.

In addition to SUD reprocessing, Premier members can participate in Ascent's Advantage™ recycling program to reduce the demand for resources needed to manufacture new devices. Under this program, Ascent jointly works with a facility to collect, disassemble and recycle

medical devices that have not been cleared for reprocessing by the FDA.

"We are proud of our long-standing relationship with Premier and its members," said Ascent COO Rick Ferreira. "The satisfaction expressed by Premier's member hospitals validates our high standards in providing this service that benefits the hospital, the environment, and, most significantly, the patient."

About Premier Inc., 2006 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient

Serving 1,700 hospitals and more than 49,000 other healthcare sites, Premier is the largest healthcare alliance in the United States dedicated to improving patient outcomes while safely reducing the cost of care. Owned by not-for-profit hospitals, Premier operates one of the nation's largest healthcare purchasing networks and the most comprehensive repository of hospital clinical and financial information. Premier Insurance Management Services, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary, operates one of the largest policy-holder owned, hospital professional liability risk-retention groups in healthcare. Headquartered in San Diego, Premier has offices in Charlotte, N.C., Philadelphia, and Washington. For more information, visit www.premierinc.com

About Ascent Healthcare Solutions

Since its inception, Ascent Healthcare Solutions, the leading independent third-party reprocessor of single-use medical devices (SUDs), has reprocessed more than 50 million SUDs, saving its customers in excess of \$500 million in supply expenses and eliminating over 10,000 tons from local landfills. Ascent's 1,700 hospital partners include most of the U.S. News and World Report "Honor Roll" hospitals. The company has agreements with all leading national group purchasing organizations as well as numerous nationally recognized hospital integrated delivery networks. The company has also been recognized as a "Champion for Change" by Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) in recognition of the dramatic environmental benefits reprocessing by Ascent provides to U.S. hospitals and surgery centers. For more information about Ascent Healthcare Solutions, visit www.ascenths.com.

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