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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAROLINAS MEDICAL CENTER'S WOMEN'S INSTITUTE TO SPONSOR 5K/TTTS EVENT

Charlotte, NC – In efforts to increase awareness about Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS), the Women's Institute is joining the third annual TTTTS Race for Hope as Presenting Sponsor, on September 20, 2008 at Freedom Park. The event will consist of a 5K Run/Walk, the Charlotte Mothers of Multiples Kids Fun Run, the NOMOTC Family Festival, and a Sponsor Expo.

As part of Carolinas Medical Center, the Women's Institute focuses on providing Gynecology, Prenatal Diagnoses, and Reproduction services to the Charlotte and surrounding communities.

"We deal with a gamut of conditions that affect babies and moms, and sometimes end up in complicated pregnancies," said Dr. Avick Mitra, MD, Director, Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Carolinas Medical Center. "Therapies are evolving with what we can offer, and we are interested in the support of any organization that is helping in this arena."

The Women's Institute visits with over 1,000 patients each month, of which 10%-20% is diagnosed with a fetal condition. Some conditions involve abnormal growth, or genetic or chromosomal problems. Some conditions involve anatomic abnormalities, and some involve multiple gestations and the problems that may ensue with multiple birth pregnancies, such as TTTS.

Pregnant women are typically referred to the Women's Institute based on a number of factors such as feeling decreased fetal movement, decreased fetal growth as evidenced by her abdomen not increasing in size, an abnormality may be detected by a maternal blood screening test, or there may be ultrasound evidence of a problem detected in the patient's primary OB/GYN office. At the Women's Institute, a Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialist would then perform a full evaluation of the pregnancy.

"As Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialists, we stay abreast of the latest literature in order to provide the most up-to-date approach to complicated pregnancies. We participate in postgraduate courses and maintain our board certification status. We are developing new skills, both diagnostic and therapeutic, in order to offer the most comprehensive care in maternal and fetal medicine," said Dr. Joseph M. Ernest, MD, Chair, Department of OB/GYN, Carolinas Medical Center. "In terms of diagnostic skills, we currently offer both an invasive and non-invasive approach to fetal diagnosis. When fetal treatment is indicated, we can offer fetal surgical procedures to those who may have more serious fetal problems."

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The Women's Institute will soon join a handful of Fetal Therapy Centers around the country that offers treatment for such serious fetal conditions as TTTS.

"Our primary focus is on the treatment of TTTS with selective laser ablation of the inter-twin fetal vessels. There are other fetoscopic procedures that we currently offer, so this skill would complete [our] fetoscopic program," said Dr. Courtney D. Stephenson, MD, Assistant Director of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Carolinas Medical Center. "I am grateful to the administration at Carolinas Medical Center for their commitment, support, and for their devotion to medical education. We, together, can bring hope and healing to the families faced with TTTS."

The Women's Institute will have a booth as part of the Vendor Expo on event day. Key staff will also be presenting information about the growing fetoscopic program, its vision and goals for the coming years in the Charlotte community. The event will be held at Charlotte's Freedom Park where participants will enjoy the race, along with one of the largest post-race expos and family friendly festivals with the Festival in the Park. For more information, please contact Talitha McGuinness at (980) 721-5799.

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Key staff with the Women's Institute will be available for interviews prior to and during the event.