Mayo Brothers to be Inducted into Healthcare Hall of Fame

William J. "Will" Mayo, M.D., and Charles H. "Charlie" Mayo, M.D., founders of Mayo Clinic, have been inducted into the Healthcare Hall of Fame. The Mayo brothers, who both died in 1939, have been credited with developing the cooperative group practice model. Through their concept of teamwork, they created the model of integrated, multispecialty group practice which has been widely emulated at medical centers around the world. Today, leading health care analysts identify this model as the most capable of delivering high-quality, cost-effective care.

The Mayos and two other new inductees were honored at a ceremony March 22 at the Hilton Hotel in Chicago in conjunction with the American College of Healthcare Executives' 2009 Congress on Healthcare Leadership. The annual honors program is sponsored by Modern Healthcare magazine, and inductees are determined by a panel of judges selected from the industry.

Perspective on the Mayo brothers' pioneering work in health care is provided by Donald M. Berwick, M.D., president and CEO of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and a leading national authority on health care quality and improvement issues. "Drs. Will and Charlie combined visionary ideals with practical skills," Dr. Berwick says. "That same integrated approach, which puts the needs of the patient first, is still in place at the Mayo Clinic today. As we look at national health care reform efforts, the Mayo model of care also provides a real-life example of the best forms of teamwork to deliver high-value care."

Those thoughts are amplified by Ken Ackerman, chairman, Integrated Healthcare Strategies, an organization dedicated to improving the operations of a wide array of healthcare organizations. "Throughout my career I have greatly admired the Mayo Clinic and its leadership," says Ackerman. "It continues to serve as a beacon of light in these troubled times in health care. The induction of Dr. William and Dr. Charles Mayo into the Healthcare Hall of Fame serves as fitting recognition of their legacy and their enormous contributions to American medicine."

Says Denis Cortese, M.D., president and CEO of Mayo Clinic, "The Mayo brothers pioneered the group practice of medicine — an innovative way to organize and deliver care to patients. Today, we are determined to build upon their legacy by bringing patient-centered health care reform to this country."

The following principles, that were articulated and established by the Mayo brothers in the early 1900s, still resonate in the 21st century:

- **Putting the patient first** — In his classic address to the 1910 graduates of Rush Medical College,

Dr. Will Mayo said, "The best interest of the patient is the only interest to be considered." In more recent times, Mayo Clinic has relied on that statement as the basis of its primary value: **The needs of the patient come first.**
Systems, procedures and services throughout Mayo Clinic revolve around the patient. Mayo is strongly encouraging this patient advocacy principle in discussions of health care reform at the national level.

**Integrated, multispecialty group practice** — In another portion of that address, Dr. Will said, "& so that the sick may have the benefit of advancing knowledge, union of forces is necessary." This "union of forces" is the heart of a system in which professionals from many medical specialties combine their skills and expertise to serve the patient. This concept of teamwork is the foundation for the Mayo brothers' model of integrated, multispecialty group practice.

**Medical education** — When the Mayos' careers began, medicine had a guild mentality. Practitioners jealously guarded their skills, fearful of losing patients or prestige. By contrast, Drs. Will and Charlie had an open-door philosophy. They freely shared their knowledge, and they traveled the world to teach and learn from others. As a result, the name "Mayo Clinic" was coined by physicians who flocked to Rochester to observe the Mayo brothers perform surgery. In the early 1900s, "clinic" had a meaning similar to "continuing medical education" today. Doctors came to learn at "the Mayos' clinic," and this informal name struck a chord with patients and the public. In 1915, the Mayo brothers formalized their educational outreach by establishing the first program of graduate medical education. This model has been replicated throughout the world. Along with educating fellow professionals, the Mayo brothers were committed to educating patients and the public — long before the concept of "patient empowerment." Their initiatives ranged from public health programs on hygiene and farm safety to a grand exhibit at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair. As Dr. Charlie explained, "The object of all health education is to change the conduct of individual men, women and children by teaching them to care for their bodies well."

**Medical research** — The Mayos recognized that research is the engine that drives medical progress. Independent of any university or medical center, they established research programs that bridged the space between basic science and clinical application. They emphasized the translational applications of research — taking discoveries in the lab from "bench to bedside." The cadre of professionals they brought to Mayo Clinic conducted research in multiple disease processes. During the Mayo brothers' lifetimes, researchers at Mayo Clinic made significant contributions in the fields of cancer, nutrition and cardiovascular diseases. This commitment to research has continued, broadened and accelerated at Mayo Clinic.

**Art of healing** — "There is a spiritual as well as a material quality to the care of sick people," said Dr. Will, in recognizing that medicine is an intangible art as well as an exact science. Starting in 1914, the Mayo brothers commissioned buildings that used art, architecture and landscaping as key components of the healing process. Cultural programs created a stimulating environment for patients and staff. Mayo Clinic has evolved since the potted palms, wicker chairs and ornate fixtures of a century ago, but this commitment remains equally strong today.

**Systems engineering** — The Mayo brothers knew that a humane, scholarly and aesthetic medical center could serve patients only if it is efficiently run. In 1908, they hired a business manager, Harry Harwick, who developed an administrative infrastructure to support their medical ideals. The year before, Henry Plummer, M.D., and his assistant, Mabel Root, created a dossier medical record that contained each patient's entire medical history at Mayo Clinic, along with a numeric registration system to identify each patient and a transportation system to move records swiftly and accurately throughout the medical center. Since then, nearly 7 million patients have benefitted from these resources, which have evolved into today's electronic medical record system. Mayo Clinic serves more than 500,000 patients each year.

**Nonprofit philosophy** — In 1919, the Mayo brothers and their wives donated the assets of the private medical practice, and a substantial amount of their personal savings, to create what is today a not-for-profit medical center with a salaried staff. In their Deed of Gift, they wrote, "The success of the Clinic, past, present and future, must be measured by its contributions to the general good of humanity."