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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PROVSource TAPS ASCENT HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS AS ITS CONTINUED
EXCLUSIVE SINGLE-USE MEDICAL DEVICE REPROCESSOR**

*Ascent helps ProvSource members save millions of dollars and serve as
stewards of the environment*

Phoenix, Ariz. – March 3, 2008 – Ascent Healthcare Solutions today announced that ProvSource renewed an exclusive contract that will enable its members to save an estimated \$6.5 million in supply costs and divert approximately 87 tons of waste from landfills by using Ascent's single-use medical device (SUD) reprocessing services over the next two years. From 2001 to 2007, reprocessing saved ProvSource members \$11.7 million and eliminated 136 tons of medical waste and \$76,400 in disposal costs.

Under the two-year agreement, which includes a renewal option, Ascent will reprocess and recycle SUDs covering seven product categories to members of ProvSource, which is a customized contracting program that VHA Inc. and Novation created in 2004 to handle all the purchasing needs of Providence Health & Services (Providence). Headquartered in Seattle, Providence is an integrated health network that includes 27 hospitals and more than 35 non-acute facilities in Alaska, Washington, Montana, Oregon and California.

Ascent, the leading independent third-party reprocessor of medical devices for top hospitals and healthcare providers throughout North America, currently reprocesses compression sleeves, EP catheters and cables, diagnostic ultrasound catheters, orthopedic/arthroscopic, external fixation, laparoscopic and general surgery devices for ProvSource members.

“We renewed our contract because Ascent has delivered outstanding service and demonstrated the value of its services through proven cost savings since we partnered with them in 2001,” said Michael Oswald, Director of Capital Equipment and Purchased Services Contracting at Providence. “The savings and waste elimination generated by reprocessing has helped us redirect significant resources toward improving quality of care and doing our part to protect the environment.”

Rick Ferreira, Chief Operating Officer of Ascent stated, “We are honored that one of the leading health systems in the country has chosen us to be its sole SUD reprocessor. It validates our leadership and reputation in the industry for helping our partners deliver the safest and best healthcare to their patients.”

According to Mr. Oswald, Providence also chose Ascent because it offers compelling value-added programs that will significantly improve the operational efficiency of its health system’s facilities. Ascent’s programs include:

- Total Account Management
- AIM (Assessment Implementation and Management) is a consulting service designed to help Ascent’s hospital partners safely set up a reprocessing program to ensure patient safety and maximize their cost savings opportunity.
- The Advantage™ program under which Ascent jointly works with a facility to collect, disassemble and recycle medical devices that have not been cleared for reprocessing by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration.
- Rapid Return allows customers to buy reprocessed devices directly from Ascent’s vast product inventory, enabling them to bypass the typical 30-day waiting period while products are being reprocessed.
- Collection Awareness Program provides a variety of reminder-and-results posters, containers and signage that positively reinforce the financial and environmental benefits of reprocessing SUDS.
- Quarterly business reviews and plans offering hospitals information about how much their reprocessing program is saving them each quarter, along with a report identifying barriers for

future growth, savings opportunities, and a plan and goals for the next quarter.

- Training and education programs including online continuing medical education via Ascent's secure web site.
- ePAMS (electronic Partner Account Management System) allows hospitals to track their orders, access order history and view real-time cost savings data.
- Value Reporting gives hospitals a quarterly report detailing the dollar savings and pounds of waste kept from entering landfills as a result of their participation in Ascent reprocessing programs.

About ProvSource

ProvSource is a customized group purchasing program that VHA Inc., a healthcare alliance in Irving, Texas, and Novation, a group purchasing organization VHA co-owns with University HealthSystem Consortium, created in 2004 to manage contracting for the entire Providence Health & Services organization. Using a three-pronged approach, the program has helped the health system realize more than \$47 million in overall supply cost savings, including \$10 million during the first year of the contract.

About Providence Health & Services

Headquartered in Seattle, Providence Health & Services is a non-profit health system serving communities in Alaska, Washington, Montana, Oregon and California. Providence includes 27 hospitals, more than 35 non-acute facilities, physician clinics, a health plan, a liberal arts university and a high school.

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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