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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute celebrates polio survivors**

Johnstown, PA (October 8, 2009) - To mark the weeklong (October 11-17) **"We're Still Here"** campaign the Memorial Medical Center's John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute in collaboration with Post- Polio Health International will hold a public celebration and luncheon on **Thursday, October 15, at 11 a.m.**

The annual campaign will focus on Community Accessibility. The festivities will begin with a special presentation by Michael Kiel, Representative for the Center of Independent Living at Hiram G. Andrews, discussing the region's available access for people with disabilities. Polio survivors from across the region will be invited to participate in the celebration at the John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute. Displays will be exhibited including topics such as polio and accessibility, the history of polio, past polio events, and an iron lung, an artificial respiration device used by polio patients in the mid 1900's.

"Our goal with the public celebration is to raise awareness and give polio survivors an opportunity to connect with the community in a meaningful way," says Barb Duryea, Director, Research and Development, John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute. "This is an opportunity for people to show their support and hear from those who have survived this devastating disease."

The weeklong "We're Still Here" campaign spearheaded by Post-Polio Health International is an effort to raise public awareness about polio survivors; specifically in their successes and contributions, as well as their urgent need for assistance and rehabilitation. The World Health Organization estimates that there are 12 to 20 million living Polio survivors worldwide, with approximately one million of them living in the United States. The event will take place in the lobby of the John P. Murtha Neuroscience and Pain Institute located at 1450 Scalp Avenue. For a reservation, call 814-269-5232.

**Poliomyelitis (Polio)** or infantile paralysis is a viral infectious disease caused by poliovirus (PV), which enters the body through the mouth, infecting the intestinal lining. It may proceed to the blood stream and into the central nervous system causing muscle weakness and often paralysis. Symptoms of Post-Polio Syndrome may occur more than 15 years after polio infection and include fatigue, new muscle weakness, joint or muscle pain and difficulty sleeping, breathing and swallowing.

**About Memorial Medical Center**

Memorial Medical Center, the flagship hospital of the Conemaugh Health System, has been recognized with the HealthGrades 2009 Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence. This ranks Memorial in the top 5% of all hospitals in the nation for overall clinical performance. For more information, visit [www.conemaugh.org](http://www.conemaugh.org).

AGENDA for **Thursday, October 15, at 11 a.m.**

We're Still Here 2009 Activities

- A special presentation by Michael Kiel on Accessibility in the region
- Words from local Polio Survivors
- Displays focusing on:
  - o Accessibility and Polio
  - o A brief history of Polio
  - o Previous We're Still Here Events
  - o Post-Polio Walk 2009
  - o The Iron Lung
- Information and Consultation from a local Massage Therapist
- A Luncheon for our Polio Survivors