

For immediate release

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ECH Radiology Department Encourages Bone Density Testing

Elizabethtown, N.Y. (May 7, 2010) – Elizabethtown Community Hospital’s radiology department is encouraging physicians to schedule bone density testing for patients in May, in honor of osteoporosis awareness month.

A DXA (Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry) scan is performed to determine if patients have, or are at risk for, osteoporosis. The DXA scan is a safe, painless and quick test that measures bone density and strength. If the test shows that a patient is at risk for developing the disease, preventive therapy can begin.

Bone density tests are also used to monitor the response to particular medications, which may adversely affect bone health.

Elizabethtown Community Hospital has performed over 1,200 bone density scans since 2004. In 2009, the unit was upgraded to offer increased testing capabilities. The new unit can provide traditional hip and spine testing, body fat analysis and lateral vertebral assessments, which can indicate compression fractures. It can also provide the same testing for children.

“A DXA scan is considered to be the gold standard for diagnosing and monitoring bone loss,” said Molly Thompson, director of radiology at ECH. “It’s one of the safest, most accurate ways to measure bone density and provide information about overall bone health.”

During the exam, patients lie still on a padded table while the DXA unit scans the hip and lower spine. Patients feel no discomfort from the exam; it is somewhat similar to having an x-ray.

According to The National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF), almost 34 million Americans are estimated to have low bone mass, placing them at an increased risk for osteoporosis. Most individuals with osteoporosis do not know they have the disease until they suffer an obvious fracture.

About Elizabethtown Community Hospital

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital providing healthcare to residents of communities throughout Essex County. The hospital offers advanced technology, access to specialists, a variety of healthcare services, and highly skilled medical staff. It boasts an all-digital radiology department, newly-renovated emergency room, lab, physical therapy services and inpatient unit offering both acute and sub-acute care.

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is the only critical access hospital in Essex County accredited by the Joint Commission. It received its critical access hospital status in 1997.