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CONTACT: Ted Pickens, Senior Director, Communications, Premier, Inc.

Phone: 630.891.4465

E-mail: ted_pickens@premierinc.com

Premier expresses support for bar coding requirements

OAK BROOK, IL (February 25, 2004) – Premier, Inc., a longtime champion of bar coding for drugs and medical devices, today expressed its support for the final rule requiring bar codes on the labels of drugs and biological products. The Food and Drug Administration’s final rule, announced today by HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson, becomes effective at the end of April.

Premier believes that the new requirements represent a victory for patients and hospitals, while providing a valuable opportunity to enhance the overall safety of care delivery and reduce medical errors. Bar coding at the manufacturer and/or distributor level facilitates the hospital’s utilization of safety technology and encourages continuous improvement of patient safety. Premier further believes that bar coding will assist hospitals in their disaster preparedness efforts by making medication tracking and monitoring more efficient.

In expressing support for the final rule, Bob Hamon, Premier’s senior vice president of Group Purchasing Services, urged the FDA to extend bar coding regulations even farther. “We applaud the FDA’s action and believe that a compelling patient safety interest also lies in requiring medical devices to be similarly bar coded. Premier strongly encourages the FDA to next move to issue regulations for all hospital-administered devices” said Hamon.

About Premier, Inc.

Premier, Inc., is a strategic alliance in U.S. healthcare, entirely owned by nearly 200 of the nation’s leading hospital and healthcare systems. These systems operate or are affiliated with nearly 1,500 hospital facilities in 50 states and hundreds of other care sites. Premier provides an array of resources supporting health services delivery in the key areas of supply chain improvement and group purchasing, comparative data and benchmarking, and insurance. Premier is headquartered in San Diego, CA, with offices in Chicago, IL; and Charlotte, NC. Advocacy and policy offices are located in Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.premierinc.com.

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