American Cancer Society Statement on Choice Hotels' Comfort Suites Go Smoke-Free

Decision Furthers National Trend

Atlanta 2007/03/12 -Choice Hotels International today announced that its 433 Comfort Suites hotels in the United States will go smoke-free beginning May 1, 2007. A leader in the hotel community on smoke-free policies, Choice Hotels was the first hotel company to include non-smoking rooms in all of its properties worldwide in 1984.

Following is a statement from John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society, on the Choice Hotels announcement:

"Today's decision to make the Choice Hotels Comfort Suites 100 percent smoke-free will remove a major threat to the health of all Comfort Suites guests and workers. In the United States alone, secondhand smoke is estimated to cause 35,000 to 45,000 deaths from heart disease and 3,000 deaths from lung cancer among nonsmokers each year. Former U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona said it himself last June: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

"Given what we know about the dangers of secondhand smoke, Choice Hotels has made a socially responsible decision in the best interests of its employees and guests at its 433 Comfort Suites in the United States. And with an estimated 70 percent of the public – smokers and nonsmokers alike – favoring smoke-free facilities, Choice Hotels' new policy makes good business sense as well.

"In fact, smoke-free policies have been shown to increase tourism in cities such as Los Angeles and New York City. The top ten travel destinations in the United States have all enacted smoke-free laws.

"Corporate smoke-free policies are gaining popularity. Comfort Suites' new smoke-free policy follows the adoption of similar policies by Disney Resorts, Marriott and Westin Hotels in the last year. We hope the example set by these and other companies will encourage additional businesses to follow suit.

"In recognition of its smoke-free policy, Comfort Suites is generously contributing $10,000 to the American Cancer Society and our ongoing efforts to protect Americans from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

"Smoke-free laws are spreading rapidly across the country. Smoke-free laws have been enacted in 21 states – up from just two states as recently as 2001 – and more than 2,500 communities. Currently, more than 50 percent of Americans are currently living in communities with a smoke-free policy.

"The American Cancer Society and its sister advocacy organization, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action NetworkSM (ACS CAN) are working throughout the country in support of smoke-free policies at the state and local levels. We also encourage members of the business community to adopt smoke-free policies as a way to protect the health of their workers and patrons while improving their bottom line."

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across America. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

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