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COVENTRY HEALTH CARE AGREES TO ACQUIRE PREFERRED HEALTH SYSTEMS

BETHESDA, Md. (October 5, 2009) — Coventry Health Care, Inc. (NYSE: CVH) announced today that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Preferred Health Systems, Inc. (“PHS”), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Via Christi Health System, Inc. PHS, based in Wichita, Kansas, is a commercial health plan serving more than 100,000 commercial group risk members and 20,000 commercial self-funded members. As part of the transaction, Coventry is entering into a long-term provider and customer relationship with Via Christi Health System and its affiliates.

“I am delighted to announce this transaction which greatly strengthens Coventry’s presence in the Kansas market,” said Allen F. Wise, chief executive officer of Coventry. “PHS has established itself as a strong local-based health plan with an excellent track record of serving employer groups in the Wichita area. This acquisition reaffirms Coventry’s commitment to strengthening its health plan footprint and is consistent with our focus on our seven core businesses. Upon completion of this transaction, we will serve more than 1 million members in our six state Midwest region.”

The transaction is expected to close in the next 90 to 120 days subject to closing conditions and regulatory and other customary approvals. The transaction is expected to be neutral to earnings in the first year after closing. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

This press release contains forward-looking statements made pursuant to the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Forward-looking statements are defined as statements that are not historical facts and include those statements relating to future events or future financial performance. Actual performance may be significantly impacted by certain risks and uncertainties including those described in Coventry’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2008 and Coventry’s Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2009. Coventry undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements.

Coventry Health Care (www.coventryhealthcare.com) is a diversified national managed healthcare company based in Bethesda, Maryland, operating health plans, insurance companies, network rental and workers’ compensation services companies. Coventry provides a full range of risk and fee-based managed care products and services to a broad cross section of individuals, employer and government-funded groups, government agencies, and other insurance carriers and administrators.