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For Immediate Release

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**Gorilla Receives State-Of-The-Art Treatment for Uterine Fibroids from
Interventional Radiologists**

Uterine artery embolization procedure performed on gorilla in Brookfield Zoo, Chicago

Fairfax, VA (September 19, 2007) – Beta, the gorilla, has been suffering since 2005 from abdominal discomfort and heavy vaginal bleeding caused by uterine fibroids, noncancerous tumors that develop in the muscular wall of the uterus. She lives at the Brookfield Zoo in the suburbs of Chicago, IL, and is a 46-year-old menopausal western lowland gorilla. Doctors have attempted to treat her with endometrial ablation (removal of the lining in the uterus) with little success. Interventional radiologists, Drs. Steven Smith, Luke Sewall and Francis Facchini from Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital, just outside of Chicago, IL, were called upon to help Beta with uterine fibroid embolization (UFE), a nonsurgical procedure that kills the fibroids.

Uterine fibroids are something Beta has in common with 20 to 40 percent of human women age 35 and older. Most fibroids don't cause symptoms—only 10 to 20 percent of women who have fibroids require treatment. Typically, women with symptoms from uterine fibroids are recommended to have a hysterectomy. With a hysterectomy, there is usually a three- to four-day stay in the hospital and about a six-week recovery period. After UFE, women typically only stay one night in the hospital and can be back to normal activity within seven to ten days. On average, 85 to 90 percent of women who have had the procedure experience significant or total relief of heavy bleeding, pain and/or other symptoms. "Most women who have symptomatic fibroids are candidates for UFE and can be cured long-term with this safer, less invasive therapy. Despite the availability of this uterine-sparing procedure, hysterectomy is still the treatment usually recommended for fibroids in the United States," says interventional radiologist Steven Smith, MD from Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital.

During UFE the interventional radiologist makes a tiny nick in the skin in the groin and inserts a catheter into the femoral artery. Using real-time imaging, the physician guides the catheter through the artery and releases tiny particles, the size of grains of sand, into the uterine arteries that supply blood to the fibroid tumor. This blocks the blood flow to the fibroid tumor and causes it to shrink and die.

"Beta is getting the modern medical care that American women deserve to have. Many women aren't aware UFE is an option for them and end up having hysterectomies to relieve their symptoms," says Smith.

About Beta, the gorilla

Beta is a 47 year old Western Lowland gorilla with bleeding from uterine fibroids. Western Lowland gorillas are dwindling in the wild, due to poaching and outbreaks of the Ebola virus. Over the years, Beta has had her share of specialists assisting in her health care. CZS Animal Programs staff affectionately refer to her as the "poster child of gorilla firsts." In addition to receiving the first UFE and endometrial ablation on a nonhuman primate, she was also the first

gorilla to give birth to an infant born through artificial insemination/assisted reproduction while on a breeding loan at Memphis Zoo in 1981. Then, in 1986, she was the first and is still the only gorilla to have had bilateral hip replacement surgery due to severe osteoarthritis.

Note: Images of Beta Western Lowland Gorilla may be downloaded at http://www.BrookfieldZoo.org/zoolink.aspx?Photo_Downloads

Additional Information on UFE

- The procedure is effective for multiple fibroids and large fibroids.
- UFE is covered by most major insurance companies and is widely available across the country.

About the Society of Interventional Radiology

Interventional radiologists are board-certified physicians who specialize in minimally invasive, targeted treatments. They offer the most in-depth knowledge of the least invasive treatments available coupled with diagnostic and clinical experience across all specialties. They use X-rays, MRI and other imaging to advance a catheter in the body, usually in an artery, to treat at the source of the disease non-surgically. As the inventors of angioplasty and the catheter-delivered stent, which were first used in the legs to treat peripheral arterial disease, interventional radiologists pioneered minimally invasive modern medicine.

Today many conditions that once required surgery can be treated nonsurgically by interventional radiologists. Interventional radiology treatments offer less risk, less pain and less recovery time compared to open surgery. Visit www.SIRweb.org.

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