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## News Release

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### **For Immediate Release**

#### **First Total Ankle Replacement successfully performed at Faith Regional**

Norfolk – January 4, 2008: Vicki Jansen of Norfolk had struggled with arthritis in her ankle for two years, trying many different treatment options that were unsuccessful. After contacting Faith Regional Orthopaedic Services, Jansen was given new hope. She is the first patient to have undergone a total ankle replacement procedure at Faith Regional Health Services.

The total ankle replacement was successfully performed by Lawrence Rubens, M.D., a board certified orthopaedic surgeon at Faith Regional Orthopaedic Services. Dr. Rubens is the first orthopaedic surgeon in northeast Nebraska to perform this procedure. He received his initial training on total ankle replacement from the American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society. Dr. Rubens continued his training with Frank Alvine, M.D., of the Alvine Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Center in Sioux Falls. Dr. Alvine was involved in the design of the “Agility Total Ankle System” that Dr. Rubens uses for his total ankle replacements.

Total ankle replacement involves replacing the damaged parts of the three bones that make up the ankle joint with artificial joint parts. The artificial ankle joint used in the replacement procedure was composed of a combination of metal on the bottom and plastic on the top. The short two-hour procedure replaced joint surfaces of the main ankle joint.

“The total ankle replacement is designed to treat the ankle arthritis and slow down arthritis from moving into secondary joints of the ankle,” said Dr. Rubens. “Good candidates for the procedure involve individuals with an isolated case of arthritis in the ankle joint.”

A successful total ankle replacement requires that the tibia and fibula heal together along with the prosthesis, before walking on the ankle is allowed. The ankle joint bears the greatest weight of any joint in the body. Therefore, the recovery period is longer after a total ankle replacement.

“This surgery is more difficult and delicate than other joint surgeries,” added Dr. Rubens. “After surgery, the patient cannot bear any weight on the ankle for six weeks so the healing process can be completed before starting to add any weight. Then weight can gradually be added back on the joint.”

Like all joint replacements, there is risk of infection and blood clotting, and a risk that the prosthesis could loosen. Additional complications can also occur due to a decrease of circulation in the ankle compared to other areas of the body such as near the knee or hip.

“When I decided to do the total ankle replacement, I didn’t want to drive 150 miles every time that I had an appointment,” said Jansen. “Dr. Rubens called me at home and reassured me that he would not do the surgery if he didn’t think he could do it here. He explained everything that was going to happen and I trusted him.” Now three months after her surgery, Jansen said she still has some sensitivity in the ankle because it is so new, but she is looking forward to spring when she can get back out there and do some walking.

For more information about total ankle replacement, contact Faith Regional Orthopaedic Services, (402) 844-8158.

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