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The Ensign Group Agrees to Sell Doctors Express Franchise System

MISSION VIEJO, Calif., March 25, 2013 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- The Ensign Group, Inc. (Nasdaq:ENSG), the parent company of the Ensign™ group of skilled nursing, rehabilitative care services, hospice care, assisted living and urgent care companies today announced that its urgent care subsidiary, Immediate Clinic Healthcare, Inc., agreed to terms to sell Doctors Express, a national urgent care franchise system, to American Family Care, Inc. (AFC).

Founded in 1982 and based in Birmingham, Alabama, AFC is one of the largest and oldest operators of urgent care and accessible primary care facilities in the country with 37 clinics in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee. The asset sale is expected to be effective on Monday, April 15, 2013, and remains subject to certain closing conditions.

"We remain very excited about the prospects for our five existing state-of-the-art urgent care clinics in the greater Seattle area, which we retained in the transaction, and we plan to expand further in that important market," said Christopher Christensen, Ensign's President and Chief Executive Officer. "While we continue to view urgent care as an important addition to the sub-acute, skilled nursing, physical therapy, home health, hospice, assisted living and other services our various businesses provide, the considerable investment and time required to further develop the franchise model has lead us to conclude that we can better use our resources by developing additional Immediate Clinic centers," he added.

Mr. Christensen reemphasized Ensign's core commitment to the skilled nursing industry, noting that he expects the addition of Immediate Clinic's physician-driven retail healthcare capabilities to enhance Ensign's relationships with hospital systems, physician groups, managed care organizations, accountable care organizations and other providers and payors, and be accretive to Ensign's existing businesses, while simultaneously diversifying Ensign's payor sources.

Michael Dalton, President and CEO of Immediate Clinic Healthcare, added that, "As new health reforms are implemented, Immediate Clinic will be primed to meet patient needs by filling the middle ground between primary care physicians and hospital emergency departments." He further said that by bringing together customer-driven health care and innovative medical technologies to deliver superior urgent care and occupational medical services, Immediate Clinic can become a true leader in the urgent care industry.

Immediate Clinic's state-of-the-art walk-in clinics will offer daily access to healthcare for minor injuries and illnesses, including X-ray and lab services, all from convenient neighborhood locations and with no appointment. Immediate Clinic owns and operates five clinics in the greater Seattle, Washington area, and planning for several additional locations in that market is currently underway.

About Ensign™

The Ensign Group, Inc.'s independent operating subsidiaries provide a broad spectrum of skilled nursing and assisted living services, physical, occupational and speech therapies, home health and hospice services, urgent care services and other rehabilitative and healthcare services at 109 facilities, seven hospice companies and nine home health businesses in California, Arizona, Texas, Washington, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Nevada, Iowa, Nebraska and Oregon. More information about Ensign is available at <http://www.ensigngroup.net>.

About American Family Care

In 1982, D. Bruce Irwin, M.D. opened the first American Family Care Medical Clinic in Hoover, Alabama. Today, there are 37 clinics in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee with several additional clinics under development. The company's model of "putting the patient first" has made it an overwhelming success. The clinics are designed, equipped and staffed to provide accessible primary care family care, urgent care, minor emergency treatment, and occupational medicine. AFC uses electronic medical records and has a high-tech, high touch approach to medical care, including digital x-ray system and an on-site laboratory. All clinics are staffed with caring and compassionate healthcare professionals. For more information about AFC please visit our website www.americanfamilycare.com.

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