



Joining Hands

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 13, 2009

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SPRINGFIELD PRIORITY CARE EMBRACES CARE INTEGRATION TO ENHANCE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY FOR PATIENTS

Primary Care Group Joins Growing Care Integration Initiative

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Hospital Sisters Health System announced today that Springfield Priority Care is embracing its Care Integration Initiative, which is dedicated to extending the highest quality health care in a very integrated and effective manner that is more efficient and accessible for patients and their families.

In discussion for two years and developed by a group of 18 physician and health care leaders from Illinois and Wisconsin, HSHS *Care Integration* builds on the Mission of the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis and focuses on care for the whole person, in the Franciscan tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. The top goals of *Care Integration* are to define integrated patient care models that meet the needs of those we serve and develop relationships with physicians and other clinicians that will allow physicians to cooperatively develop ambulatory care services throughout the region.

“Our *Care Integration Project* has, first and foremost, the well-being of our patients at its core,” said Stephanie S. McCutcheon, President and Chief Executive Officer of HSHS. “We are very excited by the positive response we have received from physician leaders in Illinois and Wisconsin toward our concept of Care Integration. We will meet the needs of all those we serve by creating collaborative delivery models with physicians and giving them the tools and infrastructure they need.

(MORE)

“We are dedicated to creating a high quality, very effective, efficient system of health services that is seamless for patients and allows our talented physicians to do what they do best,” McCutcheon added.

A significant milestone of *Care Integration* is a recent alignment between HSHS and Springfield Priority Care, a 25-year-old group of primary care physicians based in Springfield, Illinois, to become fully integrated as one entity.

“We are very pleased and proud that the physicians of Springfield Priority Care are embracing the ideals and goals of Care Integration,” McCutcheon said. “Since 1984, Priority Care has offered the highest quality service to hundreds of families in Central Illinois. Our new relationship will strengthen and enhance the health care we provide to all whom we serve.”

“The addition of Priority Care and its exceptional physicians and staff will enhance the high quality health care that all of us at St. John’s Hospital already provide to the people of Springfield and Central Illinois. We are grateful that Priority Care has joined St. John’s and HSHS on our Care Integration Journey; which re-emphasizes our strong commitment to effective, efficient and compassionate care for all we serve,” said Bob Ritz, President and CEO of St. John’s Hospital in Springfield.

Founded in 1984 as Urgent Care, the physician group was the first primary care walk-in clinic in Springfield. More than 20,000 people in Springfield and surrounding communities receive their primary care from the group. Priority Care’s goal is to be the only walk-in “urgent care” facility in the area where every patient is seen by a physician during a visit.

“We are excited about advancing the delivery of patient care in Springfield throughout involvement with the HSHS Care Integration initiative,” said Robert Juranek, MD, co-founder of Priority Care.

The physicians that comprise Priority Care are Juranek; Tracy Hendricks, MD; W. Joseph Townsend, MD; Diana Widicus, MD; William Yu, MD; Lavanva Boddu, MD; and Kelly Higgins, MD.

The alignment of Springfield Priority Care and HSHS follows a similar alignment that was announced late last year between the System and Prairie Cardiovascular Consultants, Ltd.

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Hospital Sisters Health System plans to seek out and develop care integration relationship models with physician practices in Illinois and Wisconsin to define a new health care journey in the communities we serve – and beyond. These relationships may include a variety of specific medical services from primary care to sub-specialty care.

A top priority of *Care Integration* is to increase efficiency and reduce waste in the delivery of health care. It has been estimated by health care experts that nationally there is \$1.2 trillion of inefficiencies in the delivery of medical services. Efforts to reduce waste in health care will touch all aspects of care delivery, including operational efficiencies in hospitals and clinics, better use of best practices in medicine and efforts to help people live more healthy and productive lives.

Another key aspect of *Care Integration* is expanding the use of the latest medical and information technology to create a seamless care experience for patients at all steps on the care continuum, from recognition and diagnosis to treatment, care and follow-up.

An expanded use of the latest information technology not only integrates patient information but also reduces the possibility of error, makes the decision process for physicians and families easier and lessens bureaucratic requirements for physicians and other clinical professionals.

“We are enhancing the future of health care for our patients and their families by working collaboratively with physicians to make the delivery of medicine more efficient and more structured around them; with their best interests being the highest priority,” McCutcheon said.

Hospital Sisters Health System is a Roman Catholic health care mission founded to continue the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. Sponsored by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, HSHS is dedicated to serving all people, including the poor and the needy, at each of its 13 Local Systems in Illinois and Wisconsin. Hospital Sisters Health System provides state-of-the-art health care framed in traditional values taught by St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi.

With over 14,000 staff, the HSHS hospitals in Wisconsin are located in Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire and Sheboygan, with two in Green Bay. In Illinois, the HSHS hospitals are located in Belleville, Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Highland, Litchfield, Springfield and Streator.

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**Priority Care is hosting an Open House at its newly-opened second facility:
Sunday, March 15, 2009; 12 PM to 3 PM
3631 South 6th Street, Springfield, Illinois**