

**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:** Dawn M. Cwierley, Public Relations Manager**Office:** (716) 447-6279 | **Cell:** (716) 225-9428 | **Email:** [dcwierle@chsbuffalo.org](mailto:dcwierle@chsbuffalo.org)**Orthopedic Surgery Resumes at Sisters Hospital, St. Joseph Campus***Cheektowaga Campus to become an orthopedic center of excellence for Catholic Health*

After more than a year hiatus, orthopedic surgery returned to Sisters of Charity Hospital, St. Joseph Campus this past week as part of a larger plan by Catholic Health to expand centers of excellence within each of its hospitals. For St. Joseph Campus, that means building on the hospital's top quality performance in orthopedic surgery to create a service-focused center of excellence, similar to Kenmore Mercy Hospital.

Despite the temporary suspension of elective surgery at all of its hospital in 2020 due to the pandemic, Catholic Health was able to meet the region's high demand for orthopedic care and exceeded its pre-COVID volume projections, while improving quality and reducing hospital length of stay. System leaders credit a unique co-management group it developed with several of its orthopedic surgeons for helping to guide the delivery of orthopedic care over the past year.

In 2019, the health system partnered with nearly twenty local surgeons to establish the Catholic Health Orthopedic Management Company (CHOMC) – a one-of-a-kind clinical management model designed to standardize best practices to improve quality, efficiency and patient satisfaction. The group includes a diverse set of surgeons from Excelsior Orthopaedics, UBMD Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine, Trinity Medical Orthopaedics, Buffalo Medical Group, and WNY Knee and Orthopedic Surgery PC.

“During the two-plus months we were not able to perform elective surgeries in 2020, our orthopedic co-management group met regularly to plan for the resumption of elective cases, develop new safety protocols, and plan for the continued growth of our program,” said Walt Ludwig, president of Kenmore Mercy Hospital and lead executive for Catholic Health's orthopedic service line. “This kept us focused, so when we were finally able to resume elective cases, we were able get off to a quick start.”

That same level of readiness and focus on quality and efficiency is being employed at St. Joseph Campus as the hospital looks to reestablish itself as a leader in orthopedic care. This team-based management model leads to better patient care, with the hospital and its surgeons working together to achieve the best possible outcomes and care experience for patients and their families.

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In 2020, St. Joseph Campus was recognized by BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York as a Blue Distinction Center for Knee and Hip Replacement and Blue Distinction Center for Spine Surgery, a recognition reserved for top-performing orthopedic programs. Its nursing team was also designated as “CNOR Strong,” with more than 50 percent of its perioperative nurses obtaining operating room certification, an achievement that represents a commitment to nursing excellence in the OR and outstanding patient care.

“As we look beyond COVID-19, St. Joseph Campus’ reputation for providing locally and nationally-recognized orthopedic care will set the course for our future,” said Aaron Chang, president of Sisters of Charity Hospital, Main Street and St. Joseph Campuses. “With the orthopedic team and facilities we have in place, and our strong focus on quality and safety, we will continue to offer the very best orthopedic care while expanding services to more patients throughout our community.”

The coordination of care before, during, and after surgery ensures that orthopedic patients at St. Joseph Campus receive the most efficient and comprehensive care available. Patients also benefit from onsite pre-surgical education, an inpatient floor focused on orthopedic procedures, and physical therapy in the Sisters Metabolic Center for Wellness, located on the campus.

Established in 1960, the St. Joseph Campus has evolved over the years, responding to the changing medical needs of the local community. In March, Catholic Health announced transition plans for the campus, with a focus on orthopedic, emergency, and outpatient services.

In addition to orthopedic centers of excellence at St. Joseph Campus and Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Mount St. Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston also offers high quality orthopedic services to patients throughout Niagara County, and Mercy Hospital to the southtowns, positioning Catholic Health as a premier provider of orthopedic services throughout the Buffalo/Niagara region.

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