



OSF[®] HEALTHCARE

OSF HealthCare to commemorate 100 years of Catholic health care on West Park Street in Urbana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(September 30, 2022 | URBANA, Illinois) – OSF HealthCare Mission Partners (employees), faith leaders from the Catholic Diocese of Peoria and others will gather next week to celebrate a century of health care on West Park Street in Urbana, the current site of [OSF Heart of Mary Medical Center](#), and look ahead to the next 100 years of Catholic health care in Champaign County.

A rededication of the hospital will take place at 1p.m. Thursday, October 6, followed by a public reception at Carmon's in Champaign from 2 to 4 p.m. Speakers at the day's events will include the Most Reverend Bishop Louis Tylka and OSF HealthCare Chairperson Sr. Judith Ann Duvall.

"A significant witness of our Catholic faith is to care for the sick and dying," said Bishop Tylka.

"Catholic health care has and continues to have a tremendous impact on people's lives, regardless of their faith tradition, as we have brought the healing and loving presence of Jesus Christ to those we encounter. Catholic health care always upholds the sanctity of life and is a gift to our communities and our church."

"We in the Champaign-Urbana community have been blessed over the past 100 years by having a Catholic hospital at the current location of OSF Heart of Mary," said Paul Bittorf, OSF HealthCare Director of Pastoral Care who is based at OSF Heart of Mary. "Our collective mission in Catholic health care through those years has been that of service through the provision of caring for others. In the spirit of Christ and the example of Francis of Assisi, OSF serves all people with the greatest care and love in a community that celebrates the gift of life. For the past century, this hospital has done precisely that. It has made faith-based health care available to all members of the community and surrounding regions. Doing this has been an honor, and it is our plan to continue in this spirit for the next century and beyond."

[Plans to establish a Catholic hospital](#) in Champaign County date back to 1919. Father R.J. Flynn at St. Mary's Parish in Champaign-Urbana requested the servants of the Holy Heart of Mary to assume responsibility for a new Catholic hospital in the community. At the time, there were no sisters available to meet the request. Sisters of the Holy Cross were available, so the hospital was named Mercy Hospital. Stakeholders held an ambitious but successful fundraising campaign to get the hospital off the ground. An October 1921 headline in the Twin City Review newspaper read, "We are going to build Mercy Hospital. For you. For me. Are you going to do your part?"

The original space that housed Mercy Hospital is no longer standing, but some historical artifacts from the structure were preserved.

In 1989, Mercy Hospital merged with Burnham City Hospital in Champaign to form Covenant Medical Center on the West Park Street site. A stone marker outside OSF Heart of Mary documents this merger. In 1997, the facility joined the Provena Healthcare system and was renamed Provena Covenant Medical Center.

In November 2011, Provena Health and Resurrection Health Care merged, forming Presence Health. The hospital in Urbana became Presence Covenant Medical Center.

In August 2017, OSF HealthCare, under the sponsorship of The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, signed a letter of intent to take ownership of Presence Covenant Medical Center. In February 2018, The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis renamed the hospital OSF HealthCare Heart of Mary Medical Center to honor the legacy of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary.

“Access to quality health care and choices among providers are important decisions for residents and employers,” said Urbana Mayor Diane Marlin. “We are fortunate to have OSF Heart of Mary serving our community and congratulate the Ministry as it celebrates a century of health care at the Urbana location.”

T.J. Blakeman, president of the Champaign County History Museum, remarked on the hospital’s significance to the community: “We at the museum hope Champaign County residents join us in celebrating this milestone for OSF and the practice of lifesaving medicine in Champaign County. From its early beginnings as Mercy Hospital to the merger of Burnham Hospital and beyond, we wish to say thank you and recognize the dedicated nurses, physicians and support staff that have maintained this proud and important institution.”

OSF Heart of Mary continues to thrive in 2022, boasting 206 licensed beds, nearly 700 Mission Partners, a 24-hour physician-staffed Emergency Department, and nationwide recognition for treatment of heart failure, perinatal care and total knee and hip replacement. It is home to the area’s only inpatient Adult Behavioral Health unit.

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About OSF HealthCare: OSF HealthCare is an integrated health system owned and operated by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. OSF HealthCare employs nearly 24,000 Mission Partners in 150 locations, including 15 hospitals – ten acute care, five critical access – with 2,089 licensed beds, and two colleges of nursing throughout Illinois and Michigan. The OSF HealthCare physician network employs more than 1,500 primary care, specialist and advanced practice providers. OSF HealthCare, through OSF Home Care Services, operates an extensive network of home health and hospice services. It also owns Pointcore, Inc., comprised of health care-related businesses; OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm for the organization; and OSF Ventures, which provides investment capital for promising health care innovation startups. More at osfhealthcare.org.

Pronunciations for broadcast media

Tylka: TILL-kah
Provena: pro-VEE-nah
Assisi: ah-SEE-see
Burnham: BURN-um