



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 2, 2016

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Sacred Heart Health System Using Aviation Safety Training to Enhance Patient Safety

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Sacred Heart Health System is taking a page from aviation safety protocols by implementing “pre-flight” checklists that enhance teamwork and communication, and improve patient outcomes during complicated procedures.

Dr. Charles Wyatt, a cardiovascular surgeon at Sacred Heart Hospital who has used aviation-based training, called System Safety, said it has the potential to transform the healthcare industry.

"We foster a culture that continuously strives to improve patient safety," Wyatt said. "Aviation-based training enhances safety and reliability to our patients by emphasizing communication and standard operating procedures, such as checklists."

Sacred Heart Health System is a member of Ascension, the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world's largest Catholic health system.

Aviation safety protocols are evidence-based communication tools and safety processes that have been used by the aviation industry for the last 25 years. These tools have been credited with reducing flight accidents and transforming the aviation industry into one of the safest forms of transportation in the world.

Joe Brown, a commercial airline pilot and president of Clinical Integration Solutions, an independent patient-safety consulting firm, said there are parallels between aviation and medicine.

"Just like a pilot is responsible for the operation of an aircraft and passengers' safety during flight, a surgeon is responsible for making critical decisions that can impact patient safety during a procedure," Brown said. "The System Safety model requires the operating room 'crew' to train as a team so they can respond appropriately in acute situations."

Recently Brown assisted Sacred Heart Hospital in planning its first aortic valve replacement procedure, called transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR). Drs. Wyatt and Mark Grise were part of a 25-member multidisciplinary team, made of a cardiac surgeon, interventional cardiologist, anesthesiologist and nurses, conducted extensive simulation training weeks before undertaking the first procedure.

"System Safety has shown to improve patient safety by focusing on communication, leadership and decision-making," said Grise, an interventional cardiologist at Sacred Heart Hospital. "Before doing our first two TAVR cases, we conducted extensive simulation training. When you are working with more than two dozen team members in the operating room, there is no room for error."

During the training, the TAVR team focused on six key system safety attributes: responsibility, authority, procedures, controls, process measurements and interfaces. Some of these processes included:

- **Make a list** – Developed challenge-response checklists that could be completed in 20 seconds.

- **GPS in the OR** – Designed room configuration to optimize safety and efficiency.
- **Talk it out** – Staff conducted pre- and post-op briefings.
- **Dress code** – Used color-coded surgical caps to distinguish disciplines during operations.
- **Surgery phases** – Flat-screen monitor depicted phases of procedure to create situational awareness.
- **Dry run** – Simulation training prepared team to segue from best- to worst-case OR emergencies.

The training was not a one-off event; the TAVR team continues to practice the skills they learned with monthly training sessions. Next up for Brown is assisting Sacred Heart Healthy System and University of Florida Health launch the new kidney transplant program, the first of its kind in the Panhandle.

PENSACOLA, Fla. –

About Sacred Heart Hospital

Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola (SHHP) is a 566-bed acute care hospital that has been rated by area consumers as the most preferred hospital in the Pensacola area and the best for quality and reputation. For more than 100 years, its mission has been to provide high-quality compassionate healthcare to all persons in need, with special attention to those who are poor or vulnerable. SHHP serves as a regional medical center with expertise in providing specialized care for treatment of heart disease, cancer, stroke, bone and joint diseases, and traumatic illnesses and injuries, as well as care to women with high-risk pregnancies. More women choose to have their babies at Sacred Heart than any other hospital in Northwest Florida. Sacred Heart’s Pensacola campus also is home to The Studer Family Children’s Hospital at Sacred Heart, the region’s only hospital dedicated to care of infants and children with acute injuries or illnesses. The Pensacola facilities are the hub of Sacred Heart Health System and its network of hospitals, outpatient medical parks, long-term care facility and a large group of 150 primary care physicians and specialists. Sacred Heart Hospital was founded by the Daughters of Charity in 1915 in a beautiful building that still stands on 12th Avenue in Pensacola. In 1965, the hospital was relocated to its present site on 9th Avenue. Sacred Heart Health System is a member of Ascension, the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world’s largest Catholic health system. For more information, visit www.sacred-heart.org.

About Ascension

Ascension (www.ascension.org) is a faith-based healthcare organization dedicated to transformation through innovation across the continuum of care. As the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world’s largest Catholic health system, Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable. In FY2016, Ascension provided more than \$1.8 billion in care of persons living in poverty and other community benefit programs. Approximately 160,000 associates and 36,000 aligned providers serve in 2,500 sites of care – including 141 hospitals and more than 30 senior living facilities – in 24 states and the District of Columbia as part of Ascension’s Healthcare Division. Through its Solutions Division, Ascension subsidiaries provide a variety of services and solutions including physician practice management, venture capital investing, investment management, biomedical engineering, clinical care management, information services, risk management, and contracting through Ascension’s own group purchasing organization.

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