



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 17, 2016

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Sacred Heart, UF Launch Kidney Transplant Program

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Sacred Heart Health System and University of Florida Health have collaborated to launch a new kidney transplant program to benefit the thousands of individuals across the Southeast currently awaiting a life-saving transplant.

“This is truly an extension of our mission to provide life-saving care to those who desperately need it,” said Susan Davis, president CEO of Sacred Heart Health System. “We are honored to collaborate with UF Health to provide the only kidney transplant program in northwest Florida, which will increase access to care for patients with end-stage renal disease.”

Throughout the southeastern United States the average time on a wait list for patients needing a kidney transplant is 73 months, according to the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients. Previously, northwest Florida residents had to travel to Gainesville, Birmingham or New Orleans in order to undergo kidney transplant, including the required pre-surgery and follow-up care.

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.

“Organ transplant is not only a major operation, but also an extensive process that involves regular testing and ongoing communication with your medical team, all while undergoing treatment to keep the body functioning while you wait,” said Dr. Doug Ross, senior vice president and chief clinical officer for Sacred Heart Health System. “This new program introduces a new access point for patients and brings care closer to home so they can better accomplish all the milestones that need to be achieved before and after surgery.”

Sacred Heart Health System and University of Florida Health are collaborating through the University of Florida College of Medicine’s division of abdominal transplant surgery in the department of surgery, which has performed kidney transplant operations since 1966.

The new kidney transplant program is led by University of Florida kidney transplant surgeon Dr. Rick Brian Stevens and Renalus’ transplant nephrologist Dr. Douglas Scott Keith, who have a combined experience in kidney transplant of more than 40 years.

Transplant program manager Nicole Clem, ARNP, is board-certified with the American Nurses Credentialing Center and a member of the North American Transplant Coordinators Organization and the National Kidney Foundation Council of Advanced Practitioners.

The comprehensive team to guide patients along their journey to transplant also includes a social worker, transplant medical assistant and a patient safety manager, as well as other medical specialists as needed for individual patient care.

“This collaboration brings together the best of university-based and community-based medicine to benefit more communities,” said Michael L. Good, M.D., dean of the UF College of Medicine.

Kidney failure, or end-stage renal disease, occurs when kidneys are no longer able to function at a level needed for daily life. Once this occurs, the work of the kidneys – filtering the blood to remove waste and excess water – can be done by dialysis, or the kidneys may be replaced through transplantation. The advantage of transplantation over dialysis is improving patients’ quality of life and enabling the return to a more normal lifestyle. The most common causes of kidney failure, or end-stage renal disease, in the United States are diabetes and high blood pressure. Nationwide, more than 100,000 people are on the waiting list for a life-saving kidney transplant, and 13 people die each day while waiting for a kidney transplant, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

The Sacred Heart Kidney Transplant Program is located inside the Payne Building on the Sacred Heart Hospital Pensacola campus, 5149 N. Ninth Ave. in Pensacola. For information, please call 850-416-1080 or visit www.sacred-heart.org/kidney-transplant.

About UF Health

UF Health, the most comprehensive academic health center in the Southeast, is a collaboration of the University of Florida Health Science Center and Shands. The colleges of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health and Health Professions, and Veterinary Medicine, various research centers and institutes, a network of faculty practices and the Shands family of hospitals fall under the UF Health umbrella, which extends to a regional campus in Jacksonville. UF Health also has a statewide presence through satellite medical, dental and nursing clinics staffed by UF health professionals and through affiliations with community-based health care facilities stretching from Hialeah and Miami to the Florida Panhandle. For more information, visit UFHealth.org.

About Sacred Heart Health System

Sacred Heart Health System is Northwest Florida’s leading provider of high-quality health care to children and adults. The hub of Sacred Heart Health System is its 566-bed Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola that includes the region’s only Children’s Hospital, a Level II Trauma Center, a Cancer Center affiliated with MD Anderson Cancer Network and a Heart & Vascular Institute. The Health System also includes Sacred Heart Hospital on the Emerald Coast (a 58-bed community hospital near Destin), Sacred Heart Hospital on the Gulf (a 19-bed hospital in Port St. Joe) and Sacred Heart Medical Group, a large regional network of primary care and specialty physicians with offices across seven coastal counties between Gulf Shores, Ala. and Apalachicola, Fla. For more information, call 850-416-7000 or visit www.sacred-heart.org. 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.

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 FY2015, Ascension provided nearly \$2 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. In addition to healthcare delivery, 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.