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Sacred Heart earns Florida Blue maternity recognition

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Florida Blue has designated Sacred Heart Hospital Pensacola a Blue Distinction Center for Maternity Care. The new designation is part of an effort by Florida’s leading health insurer to help prospective parents find hospitals that deliver quality maternity care.

Delivering more than 3,600 babies each year, Sacred Heart Hospital Pensacola is the most preferred childbirth facility in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and serves as the regional center for high-risk pregnancy. Sacred Heart is part of Ascension, the largest non-profit health system in the U.S. and the world’s largest Catholic health system.

“As the area’s only OB Emergency Care Center, the region’s only Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and the only local hospital with an onsite obstetrician 24/7, our team has taken many steps in order to be the safest place for mothers and babies in Northwest Florida,” said Lisa Gardner, director of women’s services for Sacred Heart Hospital Pensacola. “This level of oversight is critical in ensuring the highest level of care for the families of our community.”

Childbirth is the most common cause of hospitalization, with nearly four-million babies born in the U.S. annually. This new Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care program evaluates hospitals on several quality measures, including the percentage of newborns that fall into the category of early elective delivery, an ongoing concern in the medical community. Compared with babies born 39 weeks or later, early-term infants face higher risks of infant death and respiratory ailments such as respiratory distress syndrome, pneumonia and respiratory failure, among other conditions. These babies also have a higher rate of admission to Neonatal Intensive Care Units.

Sacred Heart is one of more than 280 hospitals across the country designated as Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care. Hospitals recognized for these designations were assessed using a combination of publicly available quality information and cost measures derived from medical claims.

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.

Hospitals that receive a Blue Distinction Center for Maternity Care designation agree to follow practices of care based on research and objective measures. The program also recognizes hospitals that have initiated programs to promote successful breastfeeding and that have a high level of overall patient satisfaction.

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.

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