

February 4, 2020**Immediate Release****Contact:** JoAnn Cavanaugh, Director Public Relations**Office:** (716) 706-2061 | **Cell:** (716) 228-4886 | **Email:** jcav@chsbuffalo.org

Catholic Health Hospitals Earn Blue Distinction® Center Designations for Quality in Knee and Hip Replacement and Spine Surgery

BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York has named Catholic Health hospitals Blue Distinction Centers® in Knee and Hip Replacement and Spine Surgery as part of its Blue Distinction Specialty Care program. Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Mount St. Mary's Hospital and Sisters of Charity Hospital and its St. Joseph Campus received Blue Distinction recognition for Knee and Hip Replacement. Kenmore Mercy and Sisters Hospital also received Blue Distinction recognition for Spine Surgery, with Kenmore Mercy named a Blue Distinction Center+ for Spine Surgery.

Blue Distinction Centers® are nationally designated health care facilities that show a commitment to delivering high-quality patient safety and better health outcomes, based on objective measures developed with input from the medical community and leading accreditation and quality organizations. In addition to quality benchmarks, facilities designated as Blue Distinction Centers+ are on average 20 percent more cost-efficient when compared to other facilities.

Knee and hip replacement procedures remain some of the most commonly performed, elective surgical procedures in the U.S., [according to a 2018 study released by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons](#)¹. Spinal surgeries are also among the most common and expensive surgeries in the U.S., according to the government-based [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#)².

Catholic Health hospitals designated as Blue Distinction Centers® for Knee and Hip Replacement demonstrate expertise in joint replacement surgery, while those designated as Blue Distinction Centers® for Spine Surgery demonstrate expertise in cervical and lumbar fusion, cervical laminectomy and lumbar laminectomy/discectomy procedures. According to the designation, this expertise results in fewer complications and readmissions for the particular specialty when compared to other facilities.

“Quality and patient safety are at the heart of everything we do in Catholic Health and we are proud to be recognized by BlueCross BlueShield of WNY for meeting their robust selection criteria for knee and hip replacements and spine surgery set by the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program,” said Dr. Hans Cassagnol, Chief Clinical Officer and Physician Executive for Catholic Health. “Our skilled surgeons, specially trained nurses, clinicians and support staff help us attain these recognitions by delivering the highest quality care every day.”

The Blue Distinction Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality care in the areas of bariatric surgery, cancer care, cardiac care, cellular immunotherapy, fertility care, gene therapy, knee and hip replacements, maternity care, spine surgery, substance use treatment and recovery. Research for many

of these programs shows that, compared to other providers, those designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate higher-quality and improved outcomes for patients.

“BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York is pleased to recognize Catholic Health hospitals for providing exceptional knee and hip replacement, and spine surgery care,” said Dr. Thomas Schenk, Senior Vice President, Chief Medical Officer, BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York. “The quality, safety and outcomes measures met through the Blue Distinction program reflect their commitment to providing better care, results and a better patient experience for our members.”

For more information about the Blue Distinction Specialty Care program and for a complete listing of designated facilities, visit www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction.

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¹ *American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Changing Demographics in Primary and Revision Total Joint Arthroplasty, 2000-2014*
Matthew Sloan, Neil P Sheth, March 06, 2018.

² *Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)*

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association - The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. BCBSA provides health care insights through [The Health of America Report](#) series and the national [BCBS Health IndexSM](#). For more information on BCBSA and its member companies, please visit BCBS.com. We also encourage you to connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

About Blue Distinction Centers - Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures for patient safety and outcomes, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for facilities located in its own service area; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers' need for affordable health care. Each facility's cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Facilities in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans' areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on bcbs.com. Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.

About Catholic Health - From delivering more than 6,000 babies each year; to offering the area's widest network of comprehensive cardiac, stroke, and orthopedic services; to providing a broad range of services for aging seniors; Catholic Health cares for hundreds of thousands of Western New Yorkers at dozens of locations throughout Erie and Niagara counties. Its healthcare network includes Kenmore Mercy Hospital, Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, Mount St. Mary's Hospital, and Sisters of Charity Hospital and its St. Joseph Campus; along with a complete continuum of Home & Community Based Care services, including skilled nursing and subacute rehab facilities, home care agencies, and diagnostic and treatment centers. For more information, visit www.chsbuffalo.org.

About BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York - BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York is a division of HealthNow New York Inc., one of New York's leading health care companies that provides access to quality health care and solutions for members throughout Upstate New York. Since 1936, BlueCross BlueShield has helped millions of people gain access to health care. Today, we offer a full range of insured, self-insured, and government programs and services covering businesses, families, and individuals, as well as life and disability coverage, dental and vision plans and stop-loss coverage. The company contributes significantly to organizations that promote physical health, community health and our region's health, and BlueCross BlueShield employees also raise and donate several hundred thousand dollars each year. Headquartered in Buffalo, NY, the company is an independent Licensee of the BlueCross BlueShield Association.