

## For Immediate Release

**Contact:** JoAnn Cavanaugh, Director Public Relations

**Office:** (716) 706-2061 | **Cell:** (716) 228-4886 | **Email:** [jcav@chsbuffalo.org](mailto:jcav@chsbuffalo.org)

# Catholic Health Converts Sisters Hospital, St. Joseph Campus in Cheektowaga, NY, into Dedicated COVID-19 Treatment Facility

*First patients admitted on Thursday as facility phases in expansion of care*

**March 27, 2020 (Buffalo, NY)** Taking a major step in the battle to care for the growing number of patients with COVID-19 in Western New York, Catholic Health formally opened its dedicated Coronavirus treatment facility at Sisters of Charity Hospital, St. Joseph Campus at 2605 Harlem Road in Cheektowaga, NY, on Thursday. The site, which will be known as the *Catholic Health COVID-19 Treatment Facility at St. Joseph Campus*, closed its Emergency Department last Saturday and discharged or transferred all remaining patients this past week. **Please note:** *Services at Sisters of Charity Hospital's Main Street Campus are not affected by this change, including the hospital's Emergency Department.*

As the first dedicated COVID-19 Treatment Facility in New York State, the 120-bed inpatient center is equipped to offer acute medical and critical care services. The first medical patients were admitted on Thursday. Critical care services are being incrementally phased in over the coming week.

Marty Boryszak, Senior Vice President of Acute Care Service at Catholic Health is leading the health system's overall COVID-19 Incident Response. Retired U.S. Navy Rear Admiral, Rebecca McCormick-Boyle, RN, Catholic Health's Chief Integration Officer, was selected to leading the transition team at St. Joseph Campus and will continue to provide executive oversight of the facility. "Turning an acute care community hospital into a COVID-19 Treatment Facility is not just a matter of flipping a switch," said Mark A. Sullivan, President & CEO of Catholic Health. "What we were able to accomplish in just one week was truly an amazing feat thanks to Marty and Rebecca's leadership, the tireless efforts of hundreds of people throughout our system, and the selfless management team at St. Joseph Campus."

Along with other proactive measures Catholic Health has taken to respond to the escalating Coronavirus crisis, Sullivan first announced plans for the St. Joseph Campus on March 19. Lauded by government and community leaders as a bold initiative in the wake of growing health concerns, the plan was designed to alleviate pressure on the system's other hospitals, while responding to Governor Cuomo's call to increase bed capacity throughout the state. St. Joseph Campus' central location in Erie County and flexibility to phase in services and critical care beds, made it the ideal fit to provide this specialized care.

“We were charged by the Governor and our County Executive to come up with creative solutions to deal with the crisis before us,” Sullivan explained. “Creating a central location to care for COVID-19 patients allows us to pool our resources to provide the very best care, while protecting the safety of our caregivers and community in a carefully structured environment.”

The treatment facility is divided into clearly designated, color-coded safety zones – red, yellow, and green – partitioned by temporary walls and prominent signage to separate restricted areas and buffer zones from unrestricted areas. This helps staff instantly identify areas of the facility where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required to conserve valuable resources. More than a dozen teams, with designated leaders from Sisters Hospital and throughout Catholic Health, were created to coordinate everything from Infection Control, Staff Education and Logistics, to Building Operations, Patient Care Services, and Information Technology.

“A major focus of our planning efforts has been on ensuring the safety of our care team,” Sullivan continued. “This means equipping them with the PPE, specialized training and ongoing support they need to protect their health, so they can provide our patients with the highest quality care.”

Initially, the facility will be staffed by nurses and clinicians from St. Joseph Campus, and critical care physicians and specialty providers from throughout Catholic Health. “We had more than 900 associates and medical providers from across our system and 200 community providers step forward to work at our COVID-19 Treatment Facility,” Sullivan added. “Having that kind of bench strength will ensure we are able to staff this facility for as long as it takes.”

The St. Joseph Campus site is a “direct admit” COVID-19 Treatment Facility, not a walk-in care facility. That means patients who meet the facility’s admissions criteria, and have an approved physician’s order, will be admitted directly from other Catholic Health facilities.

Catholic Health leaders have been in ongoing discussions with Communications Workers of America (CWA), which represents associates at St. Joseph Campus and Catholic Health, and have received outstanding support and collaboration from the union throughout the conversion process. Sullivan has also been keeping the Governor’s office updated on the project.

“Along with our Board of Directors and Medical Staff, everyone has been extremely supportive of our decision and recognizes this is the right thing to do for our community,” Sullivan added. “As we begin the critically important work of caring for patients at our COVID-19 Treatment Facility, I am especially proud and humbled by the team at St. Joseph Campus and our entire Catholic Health family, who live our mission every day, especially during times of crisis.”

# # #

*Located in Buffalo, NY, Catholic Health is one of Western New York’s largest healthcare systems serving thousands of patients and residents across its network of hospitals, skilled nursing and subacute care facilities, primary care centers, diagnostic & treatment centers, behavioral health services and home & community based care agencies. With 9,000 associates and 1,500 physicians, our continuum of care extends to more than 60 access points in Erie and Niagara counties.*