

For Immediate Release**April 1, 2021****Contact:** Dawn M. Cwierley, Public Relations Manager, Catholic Health**Office:** (716) 447-6279 | **Cell:** (716) 225-9428 | **Email:** dcwierle@chsbuffalo.org

Catholic Health LIFE participant celebrates 100th birthday with second vaccine dose

Sister Ursuline Hilinski marked her 100th birthday today with something very special. The Felician sister received her second dose of the Moderna vaccine as part of a clinic hosted by Catholic Health's Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) called LIFE – Living Independently for Elders.

"Oh, I looked forward to it," said Sister Ursuline after getting her second dose of the coronavirus vaccine. "I thought it was a good birthday present."

When vaccination staff from Catholic Health and the Felician sisters leadership team realized Sr. Ursuline's second vaccine appointment would fall on her big birthday, they knew they had to do something special.

While the pandemic had hindered plans to host a birthday party with family and friends, it didn't stop them from celebrating her in a unique way. She was given a bouquet of flowers as well as a special "100 and fabulous" sash. They also hosted a small gathering with cake and ice cream and arranged for virtual visits with Sister Ursuline's family.

"Sister Ursuline is quite spunky and has maintained such a great attitude throughout the pandemic," explained Beth Ann Hasley, administrator at the Blessed Mary Angela Convent.

"I prayed often for the health of our sisters and our families," said Sister Ursuline. "It's important to get the vaccine," she said. "So we can all stay healthy."

Now that she's fully vaccinated, the former school teacher hopes to be able to leave the motherhouse again. As COVID-19 cases increased in Western New York, the sisters limited their outside interactions and eventually isolated in their rooms for some time.

Like many of the older sisters at the Felician Motherhouse on Doat Street in Cheektowaga, Sister Ursuline is a participant in the Catholic Health's LIFE program, located on the Villa Maria Campus. Funded through Medicare and Medicaid, the LIFE program provides the support

needed to enable older adults to live independently in their homes. And, in the case of the sisters, in their convents.

“A 100th birthday is a momentous occasion for anyone, especially during a pandemic,” said John Beyer, president of Catholic Health’s LIFE program. “All of us at Catholic Health’s LIFE program would like to wish Sister Ursuline a very Happy Birthday.”

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