



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Sacred Heart Celebrates New Four-Story Children's Hospital**

**PENSACOLA, Fla.** – Sacred Heart marked 50 years as Northwest Florida's only children's hospital by hosting a ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony today for its new four-story, \$85 million facility. With 126 beds, the Studer Family Children's Hospital will increase access to specialized pediatric care and put multiple services in one convenient location at 1 Bubba Watson Drive on Ascension Sacred Heart's Pensacola campus. Patient care at the facility is scheduled to begin in May.

The new children's hospital includes a pediatric emergency department, 72-bed neonatal intensive care unit, medical/surgical beds, observation beds, a pediatric imaging department, pharmacy, inpatient rehabilitation gym, child life playrooms, outpatient lab services and a new family-friendly dining venue. The facility encompasses more than 150,000 square feet, with an additional 28,000 square feet of shell space to allow for future expansion.

The children's hospital also includes a Ronald McDonald Family Room that offers a shower room, laundry room, full kitchen, dining room, and large and open living room. Three bedrooms will provide overnight accommodations in emergency situations when families need to be seconds away from children in critical condition. Ascension Sacred Heart's Pensacola campus also is home to a Ronald McDonald House, where families can stay while their children are hospitalized.

"Ascension Sacred Heart has spent the past 50 years building our expertise in the care of children, thanks to our innovative founders, our dedicated care team and the support of our community," said Henry Stovall, president and CEO of Ascension Sacred Heart Health System. "Today, just like the children and families we serve, the Studer Family Children's Hospital continues to grow to meet the needs of Northwest Florida families. This new phase of our journey is going to help bring the caliber of each child's hospital experience to an exceptional level."

The new children's hospital is the single largest investment Sacred Heart has made in its 104-year history and the largest community-funded capital campaign of any healthcare organization in Pensacola. The faith-based health system committed \$55 million toward the project. The project has received significant community support as well, with \$29 million raised to date of the \$30 million goal from local community members and organizations.

“This is an extraordinarily exciting day for Ascension Sacred Heart Health System and for our statewide health ministry of Ascension Florida. The new Studer Family Children’s Hospital gives us the opportunity to provide an even more sophisticated, clinically advanced level of care to the children and families of this community in an environment of care and healing that’s exclusively designed with the unique needs of children and families in mind,” said Tom VanOsdol, president and CEO of Ascension Florida. “Generations of families have entrusted Sacred Heart with their care, especially with the specialized and personalized care of their children, and our new, state-of-the-art facility will ensure that Sacred Heart continues to be the best choice for all they care they need, right here at home.”

“Ascension is privileged to serve Northwest Florida with the region’s only hospital solely dedicated to the care of babies and children,” said Joseph R. Impicicche, JD, MHA, president and chief operating officer of Ascension. “This care reflects our Mission, calling us to care for all, especially those most in need. The new children’s hospital will offer a wide range of services under one roof - all available regardless of a parent’s ability to pay.”

Today’s ribbon-cutting coincides with the children’s hospital’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. At the time of the hospital’s founding, no single local facility had all the specialized equipment or nursing personnel needed to care for children. A group of local pediatricians agreed that children’s care should be centralized in one location to enable the investment in pediatric equipment and specialized nurses. The doctors approached Sacred Heart with a proposal to convert a dormitory for the old Sacred Heart nursing school into a children’s hospital. After only two weeks’ deliberation, the Daughters of Charity announced plans to create the area’s first facility dedicated solely to the care of infants and children. Sacred Heart Children’s Hospital opened on April 1, 1969.

The Studer Family Children’s Hospital has a medical staff of more than 120 board-certified physicians across 30 pediatric specialties. For more information about available services, visit [studerfamilychildrenshospital.com](http://studerfamilychildrenshospital.com).

### **About Ascension Sacred Heart Health System**

In Florida, Ascension operates Sacred Heart Health System based in Pensacola and St. Vincent’s HealthCare based in Jacksonville. Ascension’s facilities in Florida include seven hospitals and more than 100 other sites of care and together they employ more than 10,000 associates. Across the region, Sacred Heart and St. Vincent’s have served North Florida communities for more than 145 years. In fiscal year 2018, the statewide Ministry provided \$180 million in community benefit and care of persons living in poverty. Ascension ([www.ascension.org](http://www.ascension.org)) is a faith-based healthcare organization dedicated to transformation through innovation across the continuum of care. As one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the U.S., Ascension is committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable. Ascension includes approximately 156,000 associates and 34,000 aligned providers. The national health system operates more than 2,600 sites of care - including 151 hospitals and more than 50 senior living facilities - in 21 states and the District of Columbia. For more information on Sacred Heart Health System, visit [healthcare.ascension.org](http://healthcare.ascension.org).