



Hospital Sisters Health System and Prevea Health to exit Western Wisconsin market

HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls and all Prevea Health locations in Western Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley to permanently close

HSHS and Prevea locations outside of Western Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley region are unaffected by these changes

[SPRINGFIELD, Ill. and EAU CLAIRE, Wis.] – January 22, 2024 – Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS), a faith-based health system with operations in Illinois and Wisconsin, announced today that, after thoughtful consideration and thorough discernment, the system will close HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls as part of a complete exit from the Western Wisconsin region. Prevea Health, a physician network offering primary and specialty care, will also close all its locations across Western Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley.

HSHS and Prevea have initiated a thorough and organized process to safely wind-down services and to transition patient care to other providers. The majority of the closures are expected to be complete on or before April 21, 2024, with the exception of the Prevea residency clinics that will close on or before June 30, 2024. **HSHS and Prevea locations outside of Western Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley region are unaffected and operating as usual.**

This difficult decision comes after prolonged operational and financial stress related to lingering impacts of the pandemic, inflation, workforce constraints, local market challenges and other industry-wide trends.

"While HSHS and Prevea intended to create an integrated health delivery model in Western Wisconsin in 2015, our operations in the region have struggled for the past several years due to a mismatch in the supply of and demand for local health care services," said Damond Boatwright, President and CEO of HSHS. "We closely considered all other options and sought strategic alternatives. After an agreement with a suitable partner did not work out, it was determined that exiting the market is the only feasible path forward."

According to the American Hospital Association, there were 136 rural hospital closures from 2010 to 2021 as well as a record 19 closures in 2020 alone. More than 600 rural hospitals—30% of all rural hospitals in the country—are at risk of closing, according to the Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform, because they do not have adequate revenue to cover the cost of the care provided.

"We are saddened by this outcome and recognize it will have an impact for our patients in these communities in the Chippewa Valley," said Dr. Ashok Rai, President and CEO of Prevea. "Together with HSHS, we are focused on ensuring continuity of care for patients as well as helping them transition their care to other area hospitals and providers."

The closures impact approximately 1,082 HSHS and 325 Prevea colleagues and physicians, all of whom will receive support services and career transition assistance, including the potential to seek positions elsewhere in the organizations, if available.

“We made this decision with a heavy heart as HSHS Sacred Heart and HSHS St. Joseph’s have been treasured ministries of the Hospital Sisters for more than 140 years,” said Boatwright. “We extend our deepest gratitude to our colleagues, physicians and volunteers for their countless contributions—all of which have shaped the Hospital Sisters’ healing legacy. The mission behind that legacy will guide and sustain us as we move forward.”

###

About HSHS

Hospital Sisters Health System’s (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ’s healing love for all people through our high-quality Franciscan healthcare ministry. HSHS provides compassionate, quality healthcare to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable. HSHS operates physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states – Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O’Fallon, Shelbyville, and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan, and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and [Hospital Sisters of St. Francis](#) is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org.

About Prevea Health

Founded in Green Bay, Wis. in 1996, Prevea Health provides high-quality, primary and specialty health care in 80+ locations across Eastern and Western Wisconsin in clinic and hospital settings. It is partnered with six Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) hospitals across Wisconsin to provide patients a system of highly coordinated care, close to home: HSHS St. Vincent Hospital and HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center in Green Bay; HSHS St. Nicholas Hospital in Sheboygan; HSHS St. Clare Memorial Hospital in Oconto Falls; HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital in Eau Claire; and HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital in Chippewa Falls. For more information, visit www.prevea.com.

HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital, HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital and Prevea Health Media Contact

Angela Deja

Director of Communications and Public Relations

Phone: (715) 271-7707

Email: angela.deja@prevea.com