



**For Immediate Release:**

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## **CHRISTUS Health and Ochsner Health System Finalize Partnership in Lake Charles**

*Joint venture to expand services and increase resources in Southwest Louisiana*

(Lake Charles, La.) September 5, 2018 -- CHRISTUS Health and Ochsner Health System (Ochsner) announce the two systems have finalized an agreement for Ochsner to become a minority member of CHRISTUS Health Southwestern Louisiana.

The joint venture includes two hospitals, a charitable foundation, an ambulatory surgery center, imaging centers and clinics. This joint venture will also be responsible for all future health care facilities and services operated by the two health systems in the Lake Charles area. CHRISTUS Health will manage the hospitals, CHRISTUS Ochsner St. Patrick and CHRISTUS Ochsner Lake Area, and Ochsner will manage all physician and clinic operations, with physicians and clinic staff transitioning to Ochsner employment. The 13 clinic locations in the Lake Charles area will also be co-branded to reflect both parties, and will be named Ochsner CHRISTUS Health Centers.

"This partnership is for the people of Southwest Louisiana. By bringing together two strong organizations, we're building on our respective strengths and bringing greater access to care for Lake Charles and the surrounding communities. explained Ernie Sadau, president & CEO of CHRISTUS Health. "One of the most beneficial aspects of the joint venture will be our collective ability to recruit additional physicians and make a continued investment in critically needed service lines such as pediatric services, women's services, cancer services including expanded clinical trials and specialty care for our aging population such as oncology and neurology."

The partners will focus their efforts on integrating care, implementing innovative technology solutions, enhancing population health management initiatives and collaborating with physicians in Southwest Louisiana to enhance access to high quality, affordable health care services for residents in the Lake Charles region. CHRISTUS and Ochsner will build upon their successful relationship that included bringing telemedicine and cancer clinical trials to Lake Charles.



"We are committed to ensuring that more access to care is available locally and to serving the people of Southwest Louisiana," said Warner Thomas, president & CEO, Ochsner Health System. "Ochsner feels a great sense of responsibility to work closely with our partners across the Gulf South to implement innovative technology that allows for new, integrated care delivery options while also enhancing population health, including a focus on empowering patients through our digital health offerings to effectively manage chronic disease."

The integrated system in Lake Charles will be governed jointly, with seats being held by both CHRISTUS Health and Ochsner, and local members will be selected to serve on the inaugural board of directors. Together, CHRISTUS Health and Ochsner will focus on identifying opportunities to maintain and grow high-quality medical services in the region, which is expected to result in more jobs in the long term as a result of this partnership.

"We are excited to work closely with the physicians in the Lake Charles area," said Dr. Dana Smetherman, Medical Director, Ochsner Lake Charles Region. "This is an opportunity to share resources, learn from one another and attract more physicians to the area, so we can expand access to primary and specialty care and better coordinate the delivery of care for patients in Southwest Louisiana."

As the Lake Charles area is one of the fastest growing regions in the state, the joint venture will focus its efforts on enhancing access to care through physician recruitment and expanding telemedicine offerings and capabilities.

The announcement follows approval by the Attorney General, which included a public hearing in Lake Charles on July 25, 2018. Several local officials and community leaders spoke in support of the joint venture, including Lake Charles Mayor Nic Hunter, State Senator Ronnie Johns, State Representative Mark Abraham, Port of Lake Charles President Mike Eason, former Lake Charles Mayor Willie Mount and many others.

"Together with Ochsner, we are looking ahead and making plans for the future of health care in this region," said Kevin Holland, Chief Executive Officer of CHRISTUS Health Southwestern Louisiana. "We are committed to meeting the needs of our neighbors here and to improving the health of every community by making a real and direct impact on the lives of our patients. With this partnership in place, the future of health care in Southwest Louisiana looks very bright indeed."

The joint venture took effect on September 1, 2018.  
For more information, visit [www.christusochsner.org](http://www.christusochsner.org).

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**About CHRISTUS Health:**

At CHRISTUS Health, we deliver a complete healing experience that respects the individual. We serve our communities with dignity. And with a good deal of admiration. CHRISTUS Health is a Catholic, not-for-profit system made up of more than 600 centers, including long-term care facilities, community hospitals, walk-in clinics and health ministries. We are a community 45,000 strong, with over 15,000 physicians providing individualized care. Sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word in Houston and San Antonio and the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, our mission is to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ to every individual we serve.

**About Ochsner Health System:**

*Ochsner Health System is Louisiana's largest non-profit, academic, healthcare system. Driven by a mission to Serve, Heal, Lead, Educate and Innovate, coordinated clinical and hospital patient care is provided across the region by Ochsner's 29 owned, managed and affiliated hospitals and more than 80 health centers and urgent care centers. Ochsner is the only Louisiana hospital recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a "Best Hospital" across three specialty categories caring for patients from all 50 states and more than 80 countries worldwide each year. Ochsner employs more than 18,000 employees and over 1,100 physicians in over 90 medical specialties and subspecialties, and conducts more than 600 clinical research studies. Ochsner Health System is proud to be a tobacco-free environment. For more information, please visit [ochsner.org](http://ochsner.org) and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.*