

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prime Healthcare Establishes Centers of Excellence for Maternal Care at Saint Mary of Nazareth Hospital and Olympia Fields Hospital

\$1 Million Grant to Community-Based Maternal Health and Regionalized Centers of Excellence Improve Quality Care

CHICAGO AND OLYMPIA FIELDS, Ill. (Sept 1, 2026) – Prime Healthcare is announcing today that it will develop *Centers of Excellence* for Maternal Care at Saint Mary of Nazareth Hospital in Chicago and Olympia Fields Hospital in Olympia Fields, to centralize and strengthen obstetrical services where experienced multidisciplinary teams can provide mothers and newborns with the highest level of coordinated obstetrical and neonatal care.

As part of this commitment, Prime Healthcare is also announcing **\$1 million in grants for maternal health initiatives in the communities it serves**. The funding will be provided to community-based nonprofits working to improve maternal health, expand access to prenatal and postpartum care, address barriers to care, and support moms and babies.

“For many years, St. Mary’s has been here for the women and families of Chicago, providing compassionate and high-quality maternity care to generations of families. We are proud to continue that commitment to our community. We are excited about the investment, growth and opportunity this development will bring,” said Dr. Devyani Chawla, a board-certified Obstetrician / Gynecologist (OBGYN) and Director of the Birthing Center at Saint Mary of Nazareth, the largest safety net hospital and named the **Most Socially Responsible hospital in Illinois by Lown Institute**. “We know how important it is for families to have access to trusted, high-quality maternity care close to home; **concentrating maternity services at established centers like Saint Mary’s ensures the highest levels of quality and patient safety**, addressing maternal health disparities. We stand ready to work with our system and community partners and do everything we can to provide safe and compassionate care for mothers and children.”

Significantly, Prime will also expand partnerships with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and other community providers to strengthen access to prenatal and postpartum services close to home and create stronger connections between community-based care and *Centers of Excellence* for Maternal Care.

“At a time when so many hospitals are closing, including West Suburban, it is heartening to see hospital systems like Prime Healthcare investing in and expanding services based on community needs and ensuring hospitals serve communities,” said Lynn Hopkins, CEO of the PrimeCare Community Health, a FQHC that includes eight neighborhood locations throughout the Chicago area. “PrimeCare Community Health has had a long and productive

relationship with Saint Mary of Nazareth, and we are excited to continue and expand that relationship as the hospital is established as a *Center of Excellence*.”

“Aunt Martha’s share’s Prime Healthcare’s mission of serving communities and recognizes that preserving access to care requires both a deep commitment to patients and a sustainable model for delivering that care, including in the Chicagoland region,” said Raul Garza, President and CEO of Aunt Martha’s Health and Wellness, one of the most geographically diverse federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) in Illinois and a leader in children’s behavioral health and maternal health, including more than 50 years as a family planning provider and consistently positive birth weight outcomes.

“We appreciate the importance of Prime Healthcare making thoughtful decisions that strengthen quality, patient safety and long-term sustainability, and their pledge to invest in the community. Aunt Martha’s is pleased that Prime Healthcare has committed to invest \$250 million in its Illinois hospitals and we are confident those investments will have a positive impact on patients, staff, and local communities. Aunt Martha’s looks forward to finding ways to work together with Prime Healthcare in order to improve access, continuity and coordinated care for the patients and families we all serve.”

The establishment of Prime Healthcare’s Centers of Excellence for Maternal Care at Saint Mary of Nazareth and Olympia Fields will coincide with the consolidation and suspension of OB services at other locations in Joliet (Saint Joseph Medical Center), Aurora (Mercy Medical Center) and Chicago (Resurrection Medical Center). Many years of financial distress, changes in ownership, declining birth rates and volumes have made it impossible to ensure the very best quality of care for the patients served. With this consolidation, we have ensured that access to quality care and capacity is available at nearby hospitals with large and well-established birthing centers. We also value the dedication of our teams and will ensure that everyone impacted is offered a position within the hospital and have hundreds of opportunities – over three times the number of impacted positions.

The regional Centers of Excellence strategy considers extremely low and declining utilization, duplicated obstetrical capacity within a short distance, the ability of designated regional centers to absorb deliveries, and the opportunity to concentrate physicians, nurses, anesthesia, neonatal resources and emergency readiness into stronger programs.

The *Centers of Excellence* model is grounded in established national standards for maternal and neonatal care and is a comprehensive best practice approach to strengthening care. The evidence clearly shows that many low-volume centers cannot ensure quality care and safety and promotes Centers of Excellence models. The *American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists* (ACOG) and the *Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine* support regionalized, risk-appropriate maternal care that aligns patients with facilities equipped with the appropriate personnel, expertise and resources, noting that concentrating complex obstetrical care at regional centers

helps maintain the expertise needed to achieve optimal outcomes. ACOG has also recognized the challenges low-volume settings can face in maintaining clinician and nursing skills, while

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research published in *JAMA Health Forum* has identified benefits from the strategic consolidation of obstetrical services in select settings.

“We are dedicated to ensuring quality and strengthening maternal care through Centers of Excellence and partnering with communities,” said Sunny Bhatia, MD, President and Chief Medical Officer of Prime Healthcare. “**By providing \$1 million in grants directly to nonprofit community maternal health initiatives and expanding collaboration with FQHCs and trusted community providers**, we can bring prenatal and postpartum care closer to where families live while concentrating deliveries at Centers of Excellence with the teams necessary to provide the highest level of care. This is what a truly regionalized system of maternal care should accomplish: **better quality care and outcomes for moms and babies.**”

Since acquiring nine financially struggling Illinois hospitals in the past year, Prime has **invested more than \$104 million** across the Illinois hospitals, **preserved more than 13,000 jobs, created over 1,000 new positions**, implemented Epic electronic medical records, modernized facilities, recruited physicians, expanded behavioral health services, and invested in advanced clinical technology. Prime remains on track to meet or exceed our commitment to invest \$250 million into these Illinois hospitals.

Prime Healthcare continues to be recognized for strengthening hospitals and, in recent months, Prime Healthcare hospitals have been honored in ***Forbes* Top Hospitals by State**, **Becker’s Hospital Review’s 100 Great Community Hospitals**, and among **High Performing hospitals in U.S. News & World Report’s Best Hospitals** lists. This year, the hospitals have also earned **26 “A” grades in Social Responsibility** from the Lown Institute Hospitals Index; placed six hospitals on the Lown Honor Roll; received numerous Healthgrades clinical excellence and patient safety awards; and earned recognition for excellence in patient safety from The Leapfrog Group, an independent nonprofit organization focused on hospital quality.

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About Prime Healthcare and Prime Healthcare Foundation

Prime Healthcare is an award-winning health system operating 55 hospitals and more than 360 outpatient locations in 15 states, providing over 3.0 million patient visits annually. It is one of the nation’s leading health systems, with more than 60,000 staff and affiliated physicians. Twenty one of the Prime Healthcare hospitals are members of the Prime Healthcare Foundation, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public charity. Based in Ontario, California, Prime Healthcare is nationally recognized for award-winning quality care and has been named a 10 Top and 15 Top Health System by *Truven Health Analytics*. Its hospitals have been named among the nation’s “100 Top Hospitals” 75 times, and Prime Healthcare is one of Healthgrades’ most awarded

health systems in the nation for patient safety.

To learn more, please visit primehealthcare.com.

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