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For more information, contact:

Ashley Gramann
Communications Manager
(618) 651-2588
ashley.gramann@hshs.org

HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland Wound Healing Center Raises Awareness about the Impact of Heart Health on Wound Healing

(HIGHLAND, IL) – An alarming 33% of Americans currently suffer from cardiovascular disease. During Heart Health Awareness Month, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Wound Healing Center, a member of the Healogics network, is working to spread awareness about how cardiovascular diseases can affect the wound healing process. Chronic wounds affect approximately 6.7 million people in the United States and, if left untreated, an unhealed wound on the foot or leg can lead to a diminished quality of life and possible amputation. As many as 82% of leg amputations are due to poor circulation of the affected limb.

Cardiovascular diseases such as coronary artery disease, peripheral artery disease, strokes, arrhythmia, vascular disease and other issues with the heart and vessels can cause blockages that obstruct the flow of blood needed for proper wound healing. Differentiating between arterial and venous ulcers may be challenging, but a correct diagnosis can result in optimal treatment options. Careful vascular assessment is key when a patient presents with a lower extremity ulcer as arterial disease is generally contraindicated to compression therapy, the cornerstone of venous ulcer management.

“Our providers at the Wound Healing Center assess the patients to determine why the wound is not healing quickly and is considered chronic,” stated Director of Wound Care Melissa Albert. “Often cardiovascular reasons are the cause.”

HSHS St. Joseph's Wound Healing Center in Highland offers the following tips to live a heart healthy life:

- Live an active lifestyle with 30 minutes of exercise on most days.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco of any kind as it is one of the most significant risk factors for developing heart disease.

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- Eat a diet that is heart-healthy. This includes lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans and other low-fat sources of protein.
- Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity can lead to high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. All these chronic conditions can lead to heart disease.
- Ensure you get quality sleep by making it a priority in your life. Most adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night.
- Manage your stress in a healthy way with positive self-talk, using stress stoppers, doing things you enjoy, and relaxing on a regular basis.
- See your health care provider for regular screenings. This includes blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes screenings.
- Take off your socks at your next checkup and speak up about any problems with your legs or feet.

If you or a loved one is living with a wound and cardiovascular disease, contact HSHS St. Joseph's Wound Healing Center at (618) 651-2502. HSHS St. Joseph's Wound Healing Center has been caring for chronic wounds since November 2012. The Center was recognized by Healogics as a Center of Excellence in 2018. Through advanced wound healing methods, including Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, and highly trained providers and clinicians, over 90 percent of St. Joseph's Wound Healing Center patients have been healed annually.

If you have questions about chronic cardiovascular issues you are experiencing, please speak with your primary care provider. You can also request an appointment with a Prairie Cardiovascular physician by visiting prairieheart.org.

For more information about Prairie Heart Institute at HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland, visit stjosephshighland.org.

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About Hospital Sisters Health System

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high quality, Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our 15 Local Systems and physician practices in 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. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospitalsisters.org.

About Healogics, Inc.

Headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., Healogics is the largest provider of advanced wound care services in the United States, treating more than 300,000 chronic wounds patients annually across over 600 Wound Care Centers®. The Healogics team is made up of almost 3,000 employees, 4,000 affiliated physicians and a Healogics Specialty Physician practice group of nearly 300. In addition to the company's network of outpatient Centers, Healogics partners with over 300 skilled nursing facilities to care for patients with chronic wounds and provides inpatient consults at more than 80 partner hospitals. As the industry leader, Healogics has the largest repository of chronic wound-specific patient data in the country. The Healogics Wound Science Initiative, an effort launched in 2017 to provide peer-reviewed research, recognizes the value and relevance of big data and advanced analytics to drive continuous, collaborative learning towards a better understanding of how to efficiently utilize healthcare resources for patients with wounds. For additional information, please visit healogics.com.