



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland honored with Community Project Award for work helping those with substance use disorder

HIGHLAND, Ill. — HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland's emergency department was recently honored with a 2023 "Community Project" Award from the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN) for their work to decrease overdoses and stigma while increasing resources for those struggling with substance use disorder.

The Community Award recognizes ICAHN member hospitals that have implemented a program that strengthened the health and well-being of their communities and have built a partnership with community organizations such as schools, elderly services, children's groups, prevention groups, or faith-based organizations.

Substance use disorder (SUD) is a problem that has far-reaching consequences in the community. Teresa Cornelius, chief operating officer and chief nursing officer, shared, "Part of our HSHS Mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people and that includes all those struggling with substance use disorders. Alongside our community partners, we strive to increase access to help for people of rural eastern Madison County and western Bond County. We are honored to receive this award for our combined efforts."

St. Joseph's Hospital's partners include:

- Chestnut Health Systems, through the Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Grant, for Narcan access and National Drug Take Back Day participation.
- The Partnership for a Drug-Free Community and Metro East and Bond County Recovery Councils for assistance with access to local treatment and recovery support options.
- The Gateway Foundation who can provide a warm hand off for those who come to the hospital for help with SUDs.

"We recognize that the path to recovery only begins here and does not end when our patients are discharged," said Patrick Small, emergency department manager, "Over the previous year, we have worked to increase our presence at community events to actively engage people and talk about SUDs as well as the resources available to assist in recovery. This included handing out naloxone (Narcan®) and educating people on its use, providing information on local support programs for family members of those affected by SUDs, and providing copies of contact information for recovery resources that are both available and close to home," he explained.

While working to reduce the stigma related to SUDs, St. Joseph's Hospital also affirms their message that "wanting or needing help is enough." For those that come to the hospital's emergency department expressing their need for help, colleagues will actively work to get them the help they need. The hospital also provides free access to Narcan through its emergency department, as well as having a safe drug disposal bin available at the hospital's main entrance 24 hours per day.

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

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Photo Caption: HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland's emergency department was recently honored with a 2023 "Community Project" Award Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN) for their work to decrease overdoses and stigma while increasing resources for those struggling with substance use disorder. Presenting the award is (second from right) Pat Schou, executive director of ICAHN. Accepting the award on behalf of St. Joseph's Hospital were Teresa Cornelius, chief operating officer and chief nursing officer; Patrick Small, emergency department manager; and Chris Klay, president and CEO.

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 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](http://HospitalSistersofStFrancis.org) is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit hospitalsisters.org.