

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Our Lady of the Lake Health Celebrates 100 Years of Serving the Capital Region

Baton Rouge, LA — On Saturday, November 4, 2023, Our Lady of the Lake will celebrate its 100th year of serving the Capital Region. The centennial year commenced with a Mass on Friday, November 3, 2023, celebrated by the Most Reverend Michael Duca and a reception attended by the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Sisters, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System leaders, Our Lady of the Lake team members, and community partners and dignitaries, including East Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome. At that time, a proclamation was issued recognizing the enormous impact of Our Lady of the Lake's 100 years of work. Additional celebration events will be held at campuses throughout Our Lady of the Lake's 11-parish service area over the next week.

For 100 years, Our Lady of the Lake has promoted equity of care and good health for all in the community and has been committed to the highest standards of quality care with cutting-edge medical technology. Some of the innovative work includes:

- Exceptional care for children – pediatric ward opened in 1940s and Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital opened on its own campus in 2019 after years as a hospital-within-a-hospital
- Large scale emergency care with the largest emergency department in the state at the Regional Medical Center serving more than 200,000 patients a year many of whom are medically underserved
- World-class cardiovascular care as the statewide leaders in cardiology with the opening of the Heart & Vascular Institute in 2013
- Comprehensive cancer care with the largest group of specialists to fight cancer in state as part of the Our Lady of the Lake Cancer Institute

"When I reflect on our history, I'm reminded of our sponsors, the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Sisters, and the thousands of team members, physicians, providers, nurses, board members, volunteers and students who have contributed to our ministry and continue to answer the call to serve our community," shared Chuck Spicer, Our Lady of the Lake Health President. "For 100 years, Our Lady of the Lake has promoted equity of care and good health for all in our community. We remain committed to serving where we are called for the next 100 years."

History of Our Lady of the Lake Health

Six Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Sisters journeyed to the U.S. from France in 1911 on a mission to further the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. The Sisters established St. Francis Sanitarium in Monroe in 1913. Ten years later, by the grace of God, the Sisters helped build a brand-new hospital for Baton Rouge. The site chosen was next to a glistening downtown lake.

In 1921, Baton Rouge was a small river town of 22,000 residents that needed a hospital. Mother de Bethanie Crowley was invited from St. Francis Sanitarium in Monroe for a driving tour of the downtown area. As the story goes, when they neared the former Louisiana State University campus in what is now downtown Baton Rouge and its adjacent lake, Mother de Bethanie directed them to stop.



Monsignor Gassler was aghast as Mother de Bethanie purposefully picked her way through a mule yard toward a briar patch at the back of the property. He thought the area, which had been a sugar mill at the turn of the century, looked like a city dump. However, Mother de Bethanie could envision something different: a beautiful four-story brick hospital named Our Lady of the Lake Sanitarium.

Mother de Bethanie moved swiftly in bringing Baton Rouge leaders together through an ecumenical committee with five Catholic, five Jewish and five Protestant representatives. After hearing of the Sisters' success in Northeast Louisiana, the community quickly contributed more than \$30,000 to begin construction.

Nearly two years later, the new hospital opened on November 4, 1923. More than half of Baton Rouge's residents attended the dedication. The city's appreciation and support of the Sisters' healthcare ministry has never waned in the 100 years since.

The Regional Medical Center moved to its current location on Essen Lane on Sunday, April 2, 1978 — a remarkable facility with a unique place in the heart of Baton Rouge.

The celebration of its history and a look forward to the next 100 years as the region's premier provider of world-class, compassionate healthcare will continue to be recognized through the end of October 2024.

To learn more about Our Lady of the Lake's 100th Anniversary, visit fmlhs.org/lake-100.

About Our Lady of the Lake Health

Our Lady of the Lake Health is a not-for-profit Catholic healthcare ministry based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, that has been committed to serving the Capital Region and building a healthy community through excellence in patient care and education for 100 years. With more than 7,500 employees, a 900-bed Regional Medical Center, a dedicated 99-bed Children's Hospital, a 78-bed hospital in Gonzales, Louisiana, two freestanding emergency rooms in outlying parishes, and a 650+ provider Physician Group, Our Lady of the Lake Health provides comprehensive healthcare services for common to complex conditions. Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center is a primary teaching site for graduate medical education programs in partnership with LSU and is recognized in the areas of heart and vascular, trauma and emergency care, stroke, cancer care, minimally invasive procedures, and more. Our Lady of the Lake is part of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System and is driven by its mission to serve all God's people, especially those most in need. For more information, visit ololrhc.com.

