(LOUISVILLE, KY) Jewish Hospital & St. Mary’s HealthCare and Saint Joseph Health System today announced a merger of the two organizations forming KentuckyOne Health. KentuckyOne Health, the state’s largest health system, was effective retroactively to January 1, 2012.

The partners originally envisioned a three-way merger that included University Hospital | James Graham Brown Cancer Center in Louisville. Despite receiving federal and church approvals, University Hospital did not receive the necessary state approvals to participate.

“This is an historic day for the Commonwealth of Kentucky,” said Bob Hewett, chair of the board for KentuckyOne Health. “The people of Kentucky face significant health threats, not just from disease, but also from issues related to access to preventive and advanced medical care and a severe shortage of physicians. We believe that this new health system will make for a healthier Kentucky.”

Hewett introduced Ruth W. Brinkley, FACHE, 59, as the president and chief executive officer of the new organization. She is a nationally recognized health care leader and former executive at Ascension Health and Catholic Health Initiatives.

“Ruth Brinkley has the experience and the vision to lead this new organization into the future,” Hewett said. “She brings valuable executive experience in a national system as well as academic medical centers and community hospitals. Ruth’s background shows a proven track record in improving the health care delivery system to better serve people and communities.”

The system will collaborate with all health care providers, enhancing existing relationships and developing new partnerships.

“This is an exciting and important era for health care in Kentucky,” said Brinkley. “The organizations have come together as KentuckyOne Health because they recognize that continuing to function as we have is not going to solve the issues. We must change to more effectively meet the health needs of those we serve.”

KentuckyOne Health is a nonprofit charitable organization that honors the rich Jewish and Catholic heritages of its two sponsors, Jewish Hospital HealthCare Services and
Catholic Health Initiatives. As part of KentuckyOne Health, historically Jewish facilities will remain Jewish. Historically Catholic facilities will remain Catholic.

“We have had a mutually beneficial relationship with Catholic Health Initiatives for the last six years. We’re confident this is the right direction for the Jewish Hospital organization,” said Gerald Temes, MD, chair, Jewish Hospital HealthCare Services. “We are looking forward to growing together.”

Catholic Health Initiatives will invest $320 million to launch KentuckyOne Health. The new system plans to invest in an integrated electronic health record system and other IT improvements plus make additional facility, equipment and telehealth investments in communities across the state.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Heart Association, Kentucky ranks among the 10 states with the worst health indicators for cancer, obesity and death due to heart disease and stroke. More than half of the state is designated as medically underserved and there is a growing scarcity of physicians across Kentucky.

KentuckyOne Health includes hospitals, clinics, specialty institutes, home health agencies, satellite primary care centers, and physician groups with more than 80 locations, 2,500 staff physicians and more than 13,000 employees across the state of Kentucky and southern Indiana.

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