Northeast Wisconsin’s First Breast Milk Dispensary Now Open at HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center

Green Bay, Wis. – HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center in Green Bay is pleased to announce it is now home to Northeast Wisconsin’s first breast milk dispensary, in partnership with Mothers’ Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes.

Located in the Women and Infants Center at HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center, 1726 Shawano Ave. in Green Bay, the dispensary serves two purposes: to have pasteurized donor breast milk readily available to infants hospitalized at HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital and HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital in Green Bay; and to have pasteurized donor breast milk available to the public for purchase. All of the breast milk provided by the HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center dispensary is tested and pasteurized by Mothers’ Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes, based in Elk Grove Village, Illinois.

“There are a variety of reasons mothers and caretakers in our hospitals and surrounding communities may need our dispensary services,” said Amber Chibuk, Director of Women and Infants Services for HSHS – Eastern Wisconsin Division. “They may struggle from low breast milk production, they may be experiencing an illness or taking a medication that is hindering their ability to breastfeed, or they may have had a child through adoption or surrogacy. We are here to compassionately meet those needs and provide a service that, until now, was not available in Northeast Wisconsin.”

In addition to dispensing pasteurized donor breast milk to hospitalized patients and the public, HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center also accepts donations of breast milk. Those wishing to donate breast milk must be pre-screened by Mothers’ Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes. Approved donor milk is tested, pasteurized and sent back to hospitals throughout Wisconsin and Illinois for dispensing.

“Mothers’ Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes adheres to rigorous safety protocols and guidelines from the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA),” said Summer Kelly, Executive Director at Mothers’ Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes. “Potential donors are blood tested and thoroughly screened for communicable diseases, activities that increase the risk of blood borne diseases, and the use of tobacco, alcohol and medications.”

HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center is the third pasteurized donor breast milk dispensary to open in the state of Wisconsin. Other dispensaries are located in Madison and Brookfield.

“This is a wonderful new resource for the Northeast Wisconsin community,” said Dr. Thomas Huffer, a Prevea Health pediatrician and Executive Medical Director at HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital. “Breast milk provides tremendous health benefits for babies. It naturally contains antibodies and other components that help prevent serious infection,
promote neurologic development and reduce the risk for other serious illnesses. It is particularly beneficial to premature babies who are at an increased risk for infection.”

Prior to the dispensary at HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center, premature and critically-ill infants hospitalized at HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital in Green Bay had access to pasteurized donor breast milk, if needed, through an HMBANA-accredited breast milk bank in Colorado. The HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center dispensary, in partnership with Mothers’ Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes, is now the main source of local pasteurized donor breast milk for premature and critically-ill infants at HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital. It also serves healthy, full-term babies hospitalized at either HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center or HSHS St. Vincent Hospital with mothers or caretakers in need of feeding options for their babies.

“If a mother or caretaker has a baby at HSHS St. Vincent or St. Mary’s hospitals, and they are not able to produce breast milk or are experiencing low breast milk production during their stay with us, we are now able to offer them pasteurized donor breast milk as a feeding option in addition to formula,” said Amber. “We are proud to be the first hospitals in the Northeast Wisconsin region to offer this service.”

The breast milk dispensary at HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center, a nonprofit health system, is made possible through a $10,000 grant from an anonymous donor. To date, the grant has allowed the hospital to purchase enough pasteurized donor breast milk from Mothers’ Milk Bank of the Western Great Lakes to feed approximately 140 babies hospitalized at either HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital or HSHS St. Vincent Children’s Hospital, at no cost.

Breast milk donations by pre-approved donors, as well as monetary donations, will help the dispensary’s ability to continue to provide hospitalized babies pasteurized donor breast milk when needed, at no cost, in the future. Information about how to become a potential breast milk donor and how to purchase/order pasteurized donor breast milk from the HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center dispensary can be found at: www.stmgb.org/DonorMilk

A portion of the above-mentioned grant has also allowed for the creation of a mural in the HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center Women and Infants Department that honors mothers who donate breast milk to the dispensary after the loss of a baby.

Monetary donations for the HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center breast milk dispensary can be made by contacting the HSHS St. Vincent/St. Mary’s Foundation at (920) 433-8653.

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**About HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center**

HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center has been delivering quality health care to Green Bay and its surrounding communities since 1903. Patients benefit from a comprehensive range of services that include cancer care, women’s services, emergency care, preventive care across the lifespan, digestive health, orthopedic, and cardiac care. An affiliate of Hospital Sisters Health System, the hospital’s primary purpose is to continue Christ’s healing love through the delivery of competent and compassionate health care in an environment sensitive to the needs of all people. HSHS St. Mary’s Hospital Medical Center has been named one of the “100 Top Hospitals” nationwide and is accredited by the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. An affiliate of Hospital Sisters Health System, we draw on the history of St. Francis of Assisi as we move to continue serving the health care needs of our area in Christ’s healing ministry, caring for all people.

**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. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospitalsisters.org.