CROWN Consortium Receives $5M from National Cancer Institute to Advance Cancer Research across 48 Counties in Wisconsin and Northern Michigan

Green Bay, Wis. – The National Cancer Institute (NCI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has awarded the Cancer Research of Wisconsin and Northern Michigan (CROWN) Consortium a $5 million grant to provide patients in Wisconsin and Northern Michigan access to more leading-edge clinical trials over the next six years. This grant is funded through the NCI Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP).

Established in 2018, the CROWN Consortium is a collaboration of three of Wisconsin’s largest cancer treatment organizations: HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Centers, Ascension Wisconsin and Aspirus, Inc. Together, these organizations offer an experienced research infrastructure with a team of highly-skilled investigators across many areas of clinical research, including hematology, medical and radiation oncology, palliative care and pediatric oncology.

“The National Cancer Institute, the federal government’s principal agency for cancer research and training, funds grants that undergo a rigorous peer review process to ensure that the most promising research may be funded,” said Dr. Anthony Jaslowski, Principal Investigator of the CROWN Consortium and Green Bay Oncology physician at HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Centers. “To be named a recipient of NCI funding, and to be linked to this prestigious organization, can help enable members of the CROWN Consortium to conduct high-quality research and provide high-quality care to patients across Wisconsin and Northern Michigan.”

The CROWN Consortium serves nearly five million residents in 48 counties in Wisconsin and Northern Michigan, including many rural and medically-underserved populations. The NCORP grant will allow the CROWN Consortium to offer patients in these regions an expanded menu of
leading-edge clinical trials that will focus on new cancer treatments; controlling cancer symptoms; cancer screenings; preventing and monitoring cancer; and evaluating how cancer care is delivered.

“Clinical trials help us to better understand new ways to treat, diagnose and prevent cancer,” said Dr. Jaslowki. “Standard cancer treatments that are used today around the world are a result of past clinical trials and research. This grant, which the CROWN Consortium is honored to receive, could help us all to advance care not only locally, but around the globe.”

In the past five years, the CROWN Consortium has enrolled a combined total of more than 2,000 patients in NCI-sponsored clinical trials. The CROWN Consortium is one of only 46 community cancer treatment programs across the U.S. to be awarded an NCORP grant in 2019.

“There is clearly a growing level of interest among community physicians to have access to NCI-sponsored clinical trials for their patients and individuals at risk of cancer,” said Worta McCaskill-Stevens, M.D., Director of NCORP. “We have a greater number and more varied types of health systems getting involved in clinical research through NCORP than ever before. Research in more community settings and systems reflects the complexity of cancer care delivery, allowing for the development of care delivery approaches that can be implemented within usual clinical workflow.”

Established in 2014, the NCORP network brings communities access to clinical trials in 44 states, including the states of Hawaii and Alaska, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and Guam. There are more than 9,000 doctors, nurses and research staff that take part in this lifesaving research.

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About HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Centers
HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Centers includes the largest group of oncologists in Northeast Wisconsin and provides patients access to state-of-the-art diagnostic and treatment technologies, as well as multiple supportive therapies at five locations throughout Northeast Wisconsin. It has been accredited by the Commission on Cancer for more than 60 years and is recognized as an Integrated Network Cancer Program – the highest level of accreditation possible for a non-teaching hospital. With decades of experience and a passion to provide patients the best care possible, HSHS St. Vincent Hospital Cancer Centers works directly with the National Cancer Institute to bring people in the Northeast Wisconsin region access to the newest, leading-edge cancer clinical trials, drugs and prevention studies. For more information, visit: www.stvincenthospital.org/cancer

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.

About Aspirus, Inc.
Aspirus is a non-profit, community-directed health system based in Wausau, Wisconsin. Its 7,700 employees are focused on improving the health and well-being of people throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Aspirus serves communities through four hospitals in Michigan and four hospitals in Wisconsin, 50 clinics, home health and hospice care, pharmacies, critical care and air-medical transport, medical goods, nursing homes and a broad network of physicians. Aspirus was recognized in 2018 and 2019 by IBM Watson Health as a Top 15 Health System in its annual study identifying the top-performing health systems in the country. For more information, visit aspirus.org.

About Ascension Wisconsin
Ascension Wisconsin (ascension.org/wisconsin) operates 24 hospital campuses, more than 100 related healthcare facilities and employs more than 1,300 primary and specialty care clinicians from Racine to Eagle River. Serving Wisconsin since 1848, Ascension is a faith-based healthcare organization committed to delivering compassionate, personalized care to all, with special attention to persons living in poverty and those most vulnerable. As such, Ascension Wisconsin provided more than $292 million in community benefit, including care of persons living in poverty in Fiscal Year 2018. As one of the leading non-profit and Catholic health systems in the U.S., Ascension operates 2,600 sites of care – including 151 hospitals and more than 50 senior living facilities – in 21 states and the District of Columbia.