



# Heart to Heart

A publication of St. Tammany Health System

**Yochsner  
MD Anderson  
~~Cancer Center~~**

  
**St. Tammany**  
HEALTH SYSTEM

## **WORLD-CLASS CANCER CARE, CLOSE TO HOME**

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- Amy Bouton, executive editor
- Mike Scott, editor and senior writer
- Tory Mansfield, creative director
- Tim San Fillippo, senior marketing specialist
- Jan Budenz, editorial assistant

# Gratefully Yours

## Celebrating a new day for cancer care on the Northshore



Joan Coffman, FACHE

**“I am sure you will enjoy reading about our team’s steadfast dedication to you, our Northshore friends, families and neighbors.”**

When we at St. Tammany Health System talk about delivering world-class healthcare close to home for our Northshore neighbors, it is not just some empty marketing slogan. It is both a promise and a guiding principle that undergirds everything we do.

I think you will agree the cover shot of this issue speaks to that loudly and clearly.

As announced June 22, St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center is now one of seven Ochsner-affiliated sites in Southern Louisiana to boast a fully integrated cancer program based on MD Anderson’s standards and treatment plans.

It also represents a truly collaborative effort between St. Tammany Health System, Ochsner Health, and our community physicians and support teams over the past two years to meet the expectations required to earn the honor and distinction of the MD Anderson partnership.

You can read more about this new day for Northshore cancer care on pages 8 and 9 of this issue of Heart to Heart, which also contains an assortment of other stories that further speak to our commitment to the community we proudly call home.

I am sure you will enjoy reading about our team’s steadfast dedication to you, our Northshore friends, families and neighbors – and I thank you, as always, for trusting St. Tammany Health System with your family’s healthcare needs.

Gratefully,



Joan M. Coffman, FACHE  
President and CEO, St. Tammany Health System



### A new day

St. Tammany Health System President and CEO Joan Coffman speaks June 22, 2023, at an event held at St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center at which the center’s affiliation with The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center was announced. Read more on page 8.

# Ask the STHS Experts

Our seasoned professionals answer questions from our Northshore neighbors

I've heard references to "integrative oncology" in your cancer program. What does that mean?

- T.L., Covington

Integrative therapy takes care of the whole patient, not just certain aspects, from diagnosis through survivorship – and survivorship begins on the day of diagnosis, so we have a whole team of people available to guide patients through their journey.

To start with, we have an integrative oncology nurse practitioner, who



Arlyn Arseneaux

takes a holistic approach to patient care, focusing on symptom management so patients don't have to delay treatment or dose-reduce their therapy.

She focuses on the seven pillars of health: sleep, resilience (stress/anxiety), purpose, nutrition, physical activity, spirituality and environment.

Then there's what we call our "Lagniappe Services," which include yoga, tai chi, music therapy, meditation and support groups.

We have a wig boutique. We also have acupuncture available to help with common symptoms associated with treatment.

Our team includes physical therapists, speech therapists and dietitians. We have social workers to help you with any needs you may have.

The best part: Most of these are complimentary services. You don't have to be a patient of ours to take advantage of them, and you can self-refer. So, if you're a survivor, if you are going through treatments, or if you are newly diagnosed, these treatments are available to you.

- STHS Director of Cancer Services  
Arlyn Arseneaux, MSN, RN, OCN



St. Tammany Health System social workers Lisa Hidalgo, left, and Jane Neel are part of the health system's 'integrative oncology' team – but what does that mean, exactly? Arlyn Arseneaux, one of our cancer program leaders, has the answer. (STHS image)

## YOUR TURN

Do you have a question for our STHS team? Go ahead. Just ask. Email your questions to [CommDept@stph.org](mailto:CommDept@stph.org). We'll do our best to get an answer, with select responses appearing in future editions of Heart to Heart. *(Please include your hometown and the initials you'd like us to use in identifying you.)*

**I'm having my first baby in a few weeks. When should I select a pediatrician for my child?**

- M.M., Abita Springs

Congratulations! Having your first child can be such a joyful and rewarding experience.

Now, before baby arrives, is the perfect time to establish a relationship with a pediatrician. Ideally, you will develop a close relationship with your pediatrician, so it's important for you to choose a doctor who fits your needs and offers the best support for you and your family.

To find that doctor, you should schedule prenatal visits with local pediatricians. This is your chance to see their office first-hand, meet

their staff and to ask questions.

Among the questions you should consider asking:

- Is your doctor working full time?
- How quickly will you be able to get in to see your provider when your child is sick? Does the pediatrician have spots reserved for sick children?
- Who covers for your doctor when they are not available?
- Do they schedule same-day appointments?
- How do you communicate with the pediatrician after hours?
- How long does it take to get answers to phone calls or emails?
- Do they offer video visits?
- Will you have access to your child's medical records?



Dr. Jennifer Miles

You will probably have questions of your own, but these should get you started as you develop what I am sure will be a beautiful relationship between your new family and its care team.

- Jennifer Miles MD, St. Tammany Pediatrics ■

## In full bloom

A year after introducing the Daisy Award for extraordinary nursing, STHS has added the Sunflower Award as a way to honor non-nurses for outstanding contributions to our healing mission. Here are our latest winners.



STHS nurse Savanna Faught greets former patient Peggy Toner with open arms after Faught was presented with a Daisy Award for exceptional nursing. Toner, a former patient on the Orthopedics Unit at St. Tammany Parish Hospital, nominated Savanna for the honor. It was one of two nominations Savanna received. (Photo by Amy Bouton/ STHS)



STHS nurse and Daisy honoree Brittany Dixon, second from left, celebrates her award with, from left, Chief Nursing Officer Kerry Milton, Director of Observation Cheryl Connelly and AVP Nursing Kathy Felps. Brittany was nominated by the family of a patient who wrote, 'She was so sweet and pleasant to talk to, even when she had a full hospital area of patients that all required a lot of care.' (Photo by Jan Budenz/STHS)



STHS nurse and 2023 Daisy honoree Taylor Rivers shows off her award, for which she was nominated by a grateful patient who wrote, 'She looked like a CHILD, had the knowledge of a genius, the heart of a saint. She is so professional, knowledgeable, kind, efficient, attentive and compassionate. ... Taylor is the epitome of what a nurse should be and is a prime representative of St. Tammany Parish Hospital!' (Photo by Amy Bouton/ STHS)



St. Tammany Health System Social Worker Irina Sleptsova, center, celebrates her Sunflower Award with members of the AICU team at St. Tammany Parish Hospital. Irina is holding a piece of original angel artwork, commissioned by the hospital from Covington artist Jennette Brett for each Sunflower winner. Irina, who was nominated by colleague Brittany Lam, was the inaugural winner of the newly introduced award. (Photo by Jan Budenz/ STHS)



STHS Physical Therapist and Sunflower Award winner Kim Shockley, left, with Chief Operating Officer Sharon Toups and Education Director Terri Johnston. Terri nominated Kim for the award, writing, 'She used her skill and knowledge to improve the outcomes of every patient she served. Kim coordinated well with her tech to ensure every patient was safe, doing their exercises correctly and ensuring we all felt that she cared about each one of us.' (Photo by Tory Mansfield/ STHS)

# STAT!

Quick hits from the STHS newsroom

St. Tammany Health System, in collaboration with St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, has been **re-accredited by the Commission on Cancer**, a quality program of the American College of Surgeons. ... In January, St. Tammany Quality Network presented its 2022 fourth-quarter Medical Director's Award to the **Gastroenterology Co-Management Team** for their outstanding performance in GI quality measures. The team consists of **Drs. Phillips Jenkins, Russ Wardlaw, Nathan Ranney, Hamid Hussain, Steve Guarisco, Felix Rabito, Larry Gensler, Sai Veerisetty, Brandon Brousse, Greg Mula and Malcolm Andry**, along with **Lacylynn McGehee, RN BSN**, the director of the Endoscopy Department at St. Tammany Health System's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital. ... In May, STHS received an **"A" grade for patient safety** for spring 2023 from the Leapfrog Group, an independent healthcare watchdog organization, for the 15th consecutive grading period ... Also in May, STHS was named **Best Hospital in West St. Tammany Parish** by readers of Sophisticated Woman magazine for the 18th year running. ... In June STHS's Cordes Outpatient Pavilion was named **Best Diagnostic Center** by readers of CityBusiness magazine. ... STHS has received the American College of Cardiology's 2023 **Platinum Performance Achievement Award** for sustained high-level performance in the National Cardiovascular Data Registry Chest Pain-MI Registry. ... Congratulations and thanks go to newly retired STHS colleagues **Kathy Koenigseder** (20 years of service), **Terri Schexnaydre** (27 years), **Cindy Turner** (27 years), and **Cindy Whittington** (20 years). ■



Is there a St. Tammany Health System employee you'd like to honor?  
Find out how at [StTammany.health/ThankYou](https://StTammany.health/ThankYou).

## STHS Women's Pavilion is once more leading the way

With new exam table, mammograms are more efficient, more comfortable

By Mike Scott, [msscott@stph.org](mailto:msscott@stph.org)

In an effort to increase procedural precision and efficiency while decreasing patient anxiety, St. Tammany Health System's Women's Pavilion recently introduced to the Northshore a Hologic prone stereotactic breast biopsy system, its newest piece of leading-edge hardware.

It is one of just two such systems in use in the region.

"As the Northshore's premiere destination for breast care, St. Tammany Health System's Women's Pavilion is dedicated to providing our patients with the most advanced care possible but also the most comfortable experience possible," said Tiffany Raiford, the health system's director of Imaging Services. "This new Hologic system accomplishes that beautifully. Our previous biopsy system did the job fine. This one just does it better."

The centerpiece of the system is a cushioned, ergonomically engineered



Joy McWilliams, breast imaging supervisor at the St. Tammany Health System Women's Pavilion, demonstrates the facility's new prone stereotactic breast biopsy system, which makes biopsies more precise, more efficient and more comfortable than previously. (Photo by Tim San Fillippo/STHS)

exam table, on which a patient lays facedown as a care provider uses a Brevera Breast Biopsy machine to sample suspect breast tissue. That sample is then sent off for analysis.

In addition to 2-D and 3-D mammography equipment, the biopsy system includes built-in imaging equipment to provide a real-time look at sampled tissue to confirm it contains the targeted abnormality, in many cases reducing the time required for the procedure.

An adjustable swing arm provides 360-degree access to the breast and can be easily re-positioned to sample suspect tissue. Previously, a patient would often have to be repositioned to get the best sample, and in some

cases be moved to a less-than-ideal seated position, said Joy McWilliams, the breast imaging supervisor.

"The table, where the patient lays down on their stomach, is definitely more comfortable than what we had prior," McWilliams said, "and the accuracy for the targeting of the doctor is more precise."

The entire procedure takes around 30 minutes to complete, depending on the case, McWilliams said, and is no more uncomfortable than a routine mammogram.

Although a breast biopsy requires a doctor's referral, patients can self-refer for their annual mammogram and can call (985) 871-5665 to make an appointment on their own. ■

## Feds update guidance, urge regular mammos for women 40+

By STHS Communication Department

In an effort to combat what is described as alarmingly high breast cancer diagnoses among certain populations, American women are being advised to begin regular mammograms at age 40, according to guidance released May 9 by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

Previous task force guidance, in place since 2009, recommended commencing regular screenings at 50.

Insufficient evidence exists to make recommendations for women 75 or older, the panel said.

Given their proven efficacy, St. Tammany Health System has long advocated annual mammograms for women starting at age 40.

"Screenings work. They save lives. We know this," said Dr. Mike Hill of St. Tammany Health System. "We also know that the earlier breast cancer is detected, the more effective treatment will be. That's why we at St. Tammany Health System have long recommended annual mammograms beginning at age 40. Now, with this evidence-based guidance from

the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force reinforcing that stance, we're convinced even more lives will be spared."

The new recommendation was triggered by an apparent increase in the number of cancers diagnosed in women under 50 and persistently high death rates among Black women in particular. According to a 2022 study conducted by the American Cancer Society, Black women are 39% more likely to die of breast cancer than women as a whole. ■

# ‘GAME CHANGER’

Program saves time, money while also cutting opioid use

By Mike Scott, [mscott@stph.org](mailto:mscott@stph.org)

There was something wrong with her knee. Swelling within the joint was creating pain, and her daily activities were grinding to a halt.

But what was causing it? And would it require surgery to repair?

The problem, according to Bert Lindsey, director of inpatient physical therapy at St. Tammany Health System’s flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital, was that most insurance plans won’t pay for testing such as an MRI or CT scan right away, opting for a wait-and-see approach, sometimes for as long as 30 days.

“Our concern as STHS clinicians was that delays in advanced imaging resulted in prolonged opioid exposure, increased expenses for conservative treatments, as well as quality-of-life disruptions due to the inability of the orthopedic surgeon having access to the imaging valuable to providing the proper diagnosis,” Lindsey said.

The downside of that approach is obvious and outsized. America’s opioid epidemic over the past decade-plus is proof.

There had to be a better way, Lindsey thought.

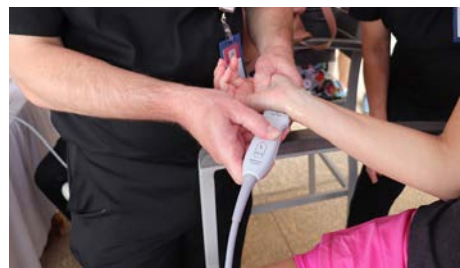
He was right. And he and his STHS colleague Jay Morange, now director of the health system’s outpatient operations, found it.

As part of an award-winning 2016 initiative at the hospital to explore non-pharmaceutical methods of treating pain, Lindsey and Morange learned about Musculoskeletal Ultrasound, or “MSKUS,” which – in the hands of a trained clinician – can help diagnose soft-tissue injuries quickly, inexpensively and noninvasively.

Although widely used in Europe



STHS Director of Inpatient Physical Therapy Bert Lindsey shows a patient an ultrasound image of his aching elbow during an outreach event held at the 2023 Mauti Tennis Classic. ‘The support of the administration here is the real secret to this program’s success,’ Lindsey said. ‘Innovation is one of our pillars as an organization, and they walk the walk when it comes to that.’ (Photo by Amy Bouton / STHS)



Mike McNeil, St. Tammany Health System’s director of outpatient physical therapy, examines a patient’s wrist using musculoskeletal ultrasound, a diagnostic tool built on the same technology used in pregnancy ultrasounds but to diagnose soft-tissue injuries. St. Tammany Health System began using it as part of its efforts to reduce opioid use. Now, it is leading the way nationally in implementing it. (Photo by Amy Bouton / STHS)

and Asia, it has only just begun to catch on in the United States. With financial assistance from St. Tammany Hospital Foundation, Lindsey and Morange introduced MSKUS to St. Tammany, including at its Therapy and Wellness Clinic in Covington.

It has been a major success.

For example, that patient with the bum knee? After a quick, painless ultrasound scan, her physician got information to help gain her advanced imaging, if necessary, without the prolonged delay.

“We saved her time, we saved her money and we spared her from opioid exposure. It really is a game-changer – a win-win-win,” Lindsey said.

If there’s a catch to MSKUS it’s that certification involves a rigorous exam. As of this writing, only nine people are certified in Louisiana to perform MSKUS. Five are physicians. The other four are St. Tammany Health System physical therapists, including Lindsey and Morange.

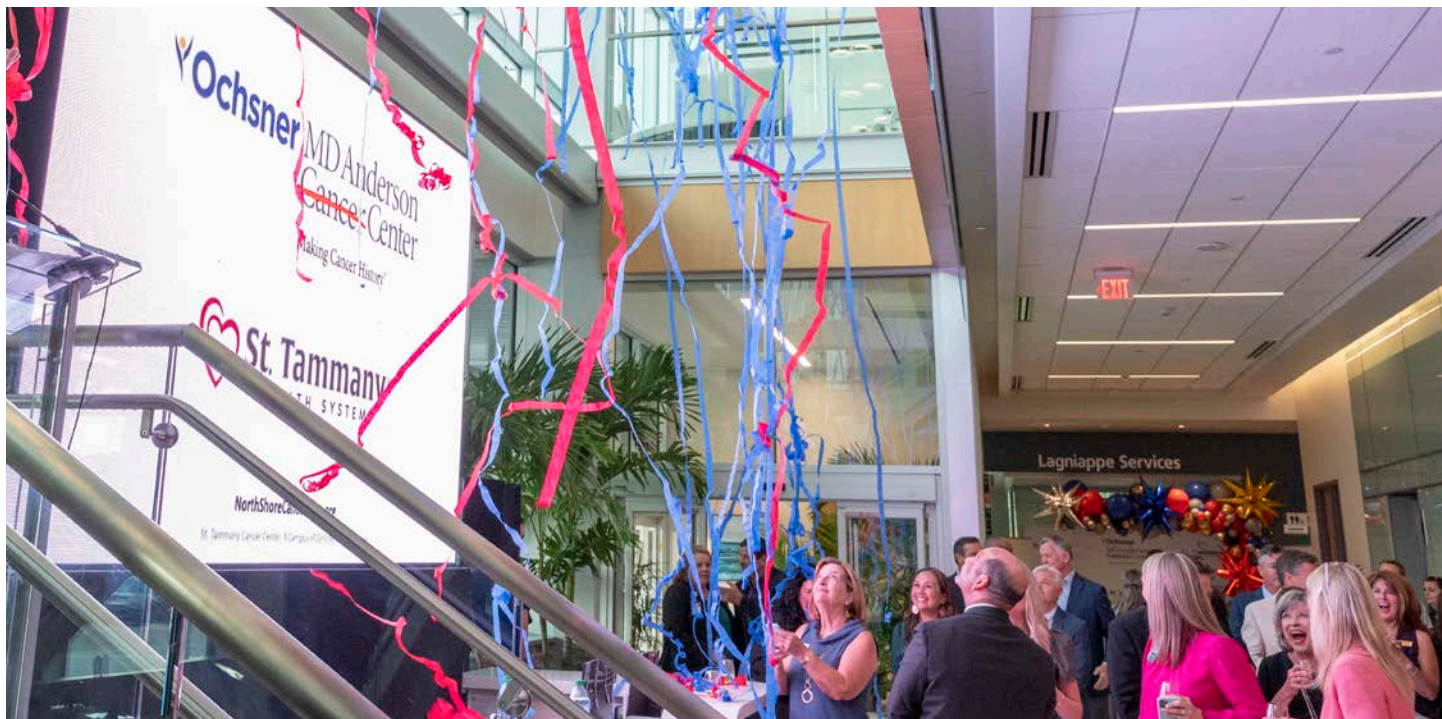
What’s more, STHS has committed to having every physical therapist in the organization certified to perform it. Ten of them, in fact, are set for testing within the next 18 months.

“The support of the administration here is the real secret to this program’s success,” Lindsey said. “Innovation is one of our pillars as an organization, and they walk the walk when it comes to that.”

He continued: “Think of the implications for our community. We’re talking real-time imaging for school athletes, weekend warriors and patients experiencing joint pain that will reduce opioid exposure and give patients peace of mind. Having so many clinicians able to perform this low-cost diagnostic within one community is a first in our nation, and St Tammany Health System is responsible for making it happen.” ■

# World-class cancer care, close to home

## Groundbreaking partnership to benefit Northshore cancer patients



Streamers rain down inside St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center on June 22 to mark the partnership between Ochsner Health and The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center to create Ochsner MD Anderson Cancer Center in southeastern Louisiana. (Photos courtesy Ochsner)

### By *STHS Communication Department*

Cancer care on the Northshore just took a Texas-sized step forward.

On June 22, St. Tammany Health System’s longtime strategic partner Ochsner Health announced a partnership with The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center to create Ochsner MD Anderson Cancer Center in southeastern Louisiana.

The fully integrated cancer program includes St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, the Covington facility operated jointly by St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner since 2021.

Other Louisiana sites included in the Ochsner MD Anderson partnership are:

- The Gayle and Tom Benson Cancer Center at Ochsner Medical Center in Jefferson Parish.
- Ochsner Medical Center – Kenner.

- Ochsner Medical Center – West Bank Campus, located in Gretna.
- Ochsner Baptist – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center.
- Ochsner Cancer Center – Baton Rouge.
- Ochsner Medical Complex – The Grove, also in Baton Rouge.

Through the partnership, cancer patients across the region now have access to some of the most advanced cancer treatments in the nation.

“This collaboration is a notable milestone in our partnership with Ochsner that will only strengthen and deepen our integrated, holistic approach to providing cancer care,” said Joan Coffman, president and CEO of St. Tammany Health System.

“We are excited to now be able to offer our community expanded

access to leading-edge clinical trials coupled with a focus on sub-specialized, multidisciplinary cancer care pioneered at MD Anderson.

“I want to thank the clinical teams at both St. Tammany Cancer Center and St. Tammany Health System, including at our Women’s Pavilion, for their tireless work to meet the standards needed to achieve this prestigious designation. It was truly a collaborative effort among the teams at St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner Health, in concert with our community physicians, to meet the expectations required to earn the honor of this partnership with MD Anderson. The results of these efforts have elevated cancer care for our community – close to home, here in Covington.”

Through this collaboration, Ochsner becomes the

Scan the code to learn more about St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center.





first and only provider in Louisiana with a fully integrated cancer program based on MD Anderson's standards and treatment plans.

"As the state's leader in cancer care, we're proud to partner with one of the global leaders in cancer care to provide a full continuum of services close to home for our patients," said Mike Hulefeld, president and COO of Ochsner Health. "Beyond MD Anderson's accolades and top national rankings, its clinicians and researchers advance innovative therapies through clinical trials several years before they become standard practice. Now, our patients will benefit from this expanded breadth of experience and therapies in Louisiana."

Ochsner is one of only seven MD Anderson partners in the country. It joins a collaborative network of hospitals and health care systems dedicated to advancing MD Anderson's mission to improve the quality and accessibility of cancer care and research.

As such, Ochsner MD Anderson patients in southeastern Louisiana receive care based on the same protocols and practice standards provided at MD Anderson in Houston and benefit from integration with its clinicians and researchers. Ochsner MD Anderson experts adhere to the philosophy, process and guidelines of MD Anderson's clinical leadership, and they provide a full range of multidisciplinary care options, including medical oncology, surgery and radiation.

"We are pleased to welcome Ochsner Health as our newest partner, and we applaud their team's commitment to excellence, innovation and patient-centered care, which aligns with our own mission to end cancer," said Peter WT Pisters, M.D., president of MD Anderson. "By working together, we are expanding our reach and impact, ensuring even more patients have access to high-quality cancer care and advanced treatments through clinical trials."

Ochsner Health and St. Tammany Health System partnered in 2014 to



St. Tammany Cancer Center is a \$50 million facility operated jointly by St. Tammany Health System and Ochsner Health since 2021. On June 22, 2023, Ochsner announced a partnership with MD Anderson Cancer Center to bring a fully integrated cancer program based on MD Anderson's standards and treatment plans to seven facilities in southeastern Louisiana, including the Covington center.



St. Tammany Cancer Center Administrator Jack Khashou addresses those gathered for the announcement of a partnership between Ochsner Health and MD Anderson.



"As the state's leader in cancer care, we're proud to partner with one of the global leaders in cancer care to provide a full continuum of services close to home for our patients," Ochsner Health President and COO Mike Hulefeld said of Ochsner's partnership with MD Anderson.

grow services and enhance access to care for area residents. In 2021, the health systems jointly opened St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, a \$50 million facility dedicated to comprehensive cancer care.

"We are thrilled to have Ochsner MD Anderson Cancer Center in Covington," said Suma Satti, M.D., vice chair of hematology/oncology at St. Tammany Cancer Center. "Our patients can be confident they will receive an enhanced level of comprehensive cancer care through this partnership, including innovative therapies not found anywhere else in our region. Each member of our select team of cancer physicians has been certified by MD Anderson to clinically practice as part of Ochsner MD Anderson and appointed

physicians will become adjunct members of MD Anderson faculty."

With a holistic, patient-centric approach, Ochsner MD Anderson's expert team provides comprehensive care to patients. A multidisciplinary team of doctors, clinicians and support specialists offers services to treat the entire person. Support professionals include nutritionists, nurse navigators, social workers, physical therapists, acupuncturists and others. Ochsner MD Anderson is dedicated to improving the health of our communities and committed to the prevention and early detection of cancer. Ochsner MD Anderson offers groundbreaking research and innovative therapies, including access to select clinical trials available to eligible patients as the only Phase I clinical trial program in Louisiana. ■

# 25 years of changing lives

‘My life would not be what it is today’ without Cardiopulmonary Rehab program at STHS

By Mike Scott, [mscott@stph.org](mailto:mscott@stph.org)

Recently, Frieda Holland spent 17 days in New England. On another trip, she spent three weeks in New Mexico.

That’s the way the retired nonprofit executive likes to live – like a human verb, a person in motion.

So when her health turned, limiting her mobility, her life changed dramatically.

“I was in the hospital for 11 days,” she remembered. “When I came out, I could hardly walk.”

In addition to putting her on oxygen, her doctors also suggested she attend cardiopulmonary rehabilitation sessions.

As she tells it, those sessions – which she attended at St. Tammany Health System’s Paul D. Cordes Outpatient Pavilion on Bootlegger Road near Covington – gave Holland her life back.

“When you become ill and you get to this point in your life, you can only control so much,” she said. “Coming here allows me to control aspects of my life that I didn’t think I’d ever control again.”

Holland is far from alone.

Founded in 1998, St. Tammany Health System’s Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Program marks its 25th anniversary this year. In that time, it has improved the quality of life of countless patients like “Miss Frieda,” as the staff knows her.

Much of the work is done in the facility’s gym, which is filled with the same sort of exercise equipment one might find in a non-medical



Frieda Holland, a patient of the cardiopulmonary rehab program at St. Tammany Health System, said the team there – including STHS Exercise Physiologist David Speirer, pictured – are like old friends. The cardiopulmonary program celebrates its 25th year in 2023. (Photo by Tim San Filippo / STHS)

gym, but which is overseen by a staff of medically trained professionals, including an on-site physician to help with any unexpected setbacks or emergencies.

Staffers there also provide educational support to their patients, to equip them with the knowledge necessary to make the most of their efforts. Additionally – and this was a big one for Miss Frieda, especially when she was still weak following her hospital stay – there’s the emotional support.

“The team here cares,” she said when asked what sets STHS’s program apart.

“I’ve gotten to know them extremely well over these last years,” she continued, “and these people truly care. There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for anyone here and, vice-versa, I know there’s nothing they wouldn’t do for me.”

During a recent workout, that was evident.

As Miss Frieda chugged along on a treadmill, she traded jibes – and smiles – with longtime STHS Exercise Physiologist David Speirer, who has been with the health system since the 1998 launch of the Pulmonary Rehab program.

Officially, he was there to oversee her workout. It felt more like a hang

session between two old friends.

That’s not at all uncommon, according to STHS Director of Outpatient Cardiopulmonary Services Missy Moore.

“Miss Frieda has meant as much to us as we have meant to her,” Moore said. “It’s not something you plan on, but it’s just a benefit of the job. ... The people and the friendships we gain from this – you can’t put it into words sometimes.”

Miss Frieda doesn’t share that struggle. She can certainly put it into words. Two of them, in particular: “Thank” and “you.”

For getting her back on her feet. For getting her back behind the wheel of her car. For getting her in shape to do the traveling she loves so much.

“Had it not been – and I mean that sincerely and with all my heart – had it not been for rehab, I wouldn’t have been able to do those things,” she said.

She continued: “My life would not be what it is today. I wouldn’t be taking vacations. I wouldn’t be doing things. I wouldn’t feel like the person that I feel today.” ■

*Learn more about St. Tammany Health System’s Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation program at [StTammany.health/Cardiac\\_Pulmonary\\_Rehab](https://StTammany.health/Cardiac_Pulmonary_Rehab).*

Scan the code to hear Frieda Holland’s story in her own words.



## Eat Well, Live Well: the small-fry edition

Kids crash the kitchen for quarterly cooking demonstration



Chef Gavin Jobe of Meribo in Covington poses for a photo with the youngsters participating in June's Eat Well, Live Well cooking demonstration, an initiative of the community-based Healthier Northshore designed to foster healthy eating habits among local residents. (Photo by Tory Mansfield / STHS)

By Mike Scott, [mscott@stph.org](mailto:mscott@stph.org)

The idea is both simple and time-tested: People who learn healthy eating habits at a young age tend to stick with those habits for the rest of their lives.

So, for its latest quarterly Eat Well, Live Well cooking demonstration, the public health coalition Healthier Northshore — spearheaded by St. Tammany Health System — turned the kitchen classroom at the Bogalusa YMCA over to kids.

“We’re calling this one our ‘small-fry edition,’” St. Tammany Health System Director of Community Engagement Anne Pablovich said. “And I have to tell you, I love this. These kids are so into it. Cooking is a lifetime love, and these little chefs are doing such a great job.”

The gung-ho kid chefs, of course, were the stars of the show, but “Chopped” champ Chef Gavin Jobe of Meribo in Covington was the event’s MVP. Not only did he guide the participants through the preparation of jerked pork chops with summer succotash — made from vegetables available in local gardens and groceries — but it came with

a side order of culinary passion.

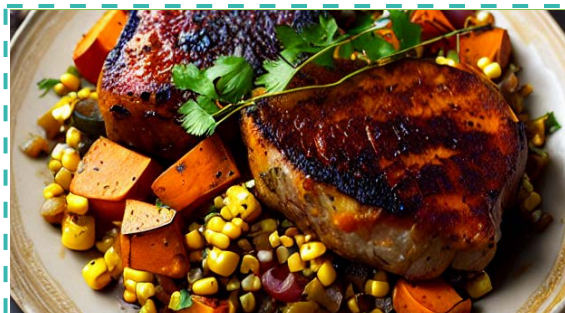
“As a kid, my interest in cooking was encouraged and fostered by my parents and grandparents. I just want to share that,” he said. “I feel like this is probably the most productive way a chef can give back.”

Of those in attendance, 15 kids got spots at one of five cooking stations in the YMCA’s kitchen. As in a professional kitchen, those at each were given a different task.

At one, they were asked to chop sweet potatoes. At another, they stripped kernels from corn cobs and marinated pork chops. Other stations had other responsibilities to prep the ingredients.

“This is great,” said Toni St. Philip, executive director of the Bogalusa YMCA. “I think it’s different when they do it themselves. Their parents could have cooked the same thing, but when they do it themselves, it makes a difference.” ■

*Visit [HealthierNorthshore.Healthfor.org](http://HealthierNorthshore.Healthfor.org) for more about the initiative, including dates for upcoming events.*



### Chef Gavin's Jerk Pork Chops with Roasted Sweet Potatoes and Summer Vegetable Succotash

Yield: 4 servings  
Time: Approximately 35 minutes

#### Ingredients:

2 medium sweet potatoes	1 to 2 tomatoes (depending on size)
4 to 6 pork chops	3 cloves garlic, minced
½ cup jerk rub (Walkerswood brand recommended)	4 tbs olive oil
2 ears corn	1 can black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed
1 medium red onion	Splash of chicken stock (may use bouillon cube)
1 bell pepper	Salt and pepper to taste

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Poke a couple dozen holes in the sweet potatoes with a fork and rub each with a small amount of olive oil. Place the sweet potatoes on the baking sheet and bake in preheated oven until they are soft (about 30 to 40 minutes, depending on size). While the sweet potatoes bake, rub pork chops with jerk seasoning and set aside.

To make the succotash, cut the corn kernels from the cob and set aside. Dice the onion and bell pepper to a medium dice, then separately dice the tomato(es) and mince the garlic.

Add 2 tbs olive oil to a sauté pan over medium heat. Add diced onion and bell pepper to heated pan and cook until they begin browning at the edges. Add corn kernels and cook for another minute.

Add tomatoes, garlic, black-eyed peas and chicken stock, and sauté for 5 more minutes until the vegetables are softened. Season with salt and pepper.

In another sauté pan, add the remaining oil and turn the heat to high. Carefully place the pork chops in the heated pan. Cook for about 3 minutes on each side, then remove from pan let and rest 3 to 4 minutes before serving.

Put a scoop of the succotash, a pork chop and a half sweet potato on each plate and enjoy!

Look! Cut me out! I'm a bookmark for your favorite cookbook!

# Buddies for Life program plants seeds of friendship

By Mike Scott, [miscott@stph.org](mailto:miscott@stph.org)

Things were bright this past May on the campus of St. Tammany Health System's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital.

The sun was bright. The flowers were bright. And the smiles were perhaps brightest of all.

It was all because of a particularly bright idea, named Buddies for Life, designed to bring members of the community together and, in the process, forge friendships among two groups at risk of social isolation.

"It feels great to see it become reality," said Nicole Suhre, executive director of St. Tammany Foundation. "We worked really intensely on this – and, really, this is just the start – but seeing it come together, it's so gratifying and so fun."

In this case, that fun centered on residents from the local Christwood retirement community, who buddied up with intellectually challenged representatives from STARC of Louisiana to beautify the hospital's gardens with 111 flowering plants.

The hope is that it will be the beginning of some beautiful friendships.

"We're going to do a yearlong set of projects, all different projects," Suhre said. "The first one's gardening, but we're doing different things through the year to pair those two groups together."

The whole idea is the result of the Chevron Community Fellows Program, operated in conjunction with Northshore Community Foundation and designed to bring the leaders of local nonprofit groups together to form bonds and to better the community all at once.



Two new friends get their hands dirty during a Buddies for Life planting day at St. Tammany Health System main hospital campus. (Photos by Tim San Filippo/STHS)



St. Tammany Hospital Foundation and the St. Tammany Health System grounds crew joined recently with Christwood retirement community, STARC of Louisiana and LOPA for a gardening day as part of a new program called 'Buddies for Life.'



St. Tammany Health System Grounds Supervisor Robin Percle, right, helps devise a planting plan for the Buddies for Life project.

Now in its third year, the program invites the leaders of 15 or so local nonprofits to participate in a yearlong project in which each is teamed with three others and challenges them to come up with a community project that leverages the unique capabilities of each.

Those ideas are then pitched to a panel of judges, who offer feedback. Winning ideas are then awarded a grant to make their project become a reality.

As part of the program's second class, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation was teamed with the Christwood Foundation, STARC and Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency.

"We went through a lot of iterations of ideas, and, after some hits and misses, we got some guidance and came up with the Buddies

for Life program," Suhre said.

They were also awarded a \$3,000 grant to get the program off the ground.

Even though it's only in its infancy, watching the Christwood and STARC representatives planting the seeds of friendship was enormously satisfying, Suhre added.

That goes double for Northshore Foundation Vice President Leslie Spencer Landry, who helps oversee the Chevron Community Fellows Program.

"It's really about encouraging them to think outside the box, be innovative, be creative and come together to use each others' resources to form some collaborative partnerships. And what happens after this? We are encouraged by this partnership and look forward to watching it and others like it grow." ■



As the chairman of NFLPA local chapters' Events Committee, former Tulane Greenie Ron Krajewski – who also spent a bit of time with the New Orleans Saints back in his playing days – is the man most responsible for having the association team up with St. Tammany Hospital Foundation.

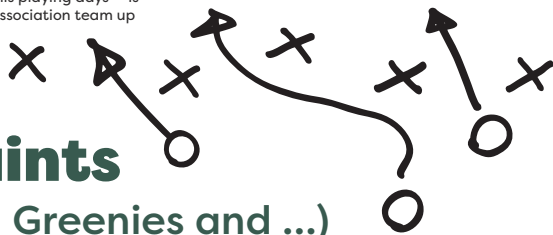


A Saints fan gets a high-five from former LSU Tiger and New England Patriot Eric Alexander – and his Super Bowl ring from the Patriots' victory in 2005's Super Bowl XXXIX.

## Patron Saints

(and Tigers and Greenies and ...)

On April 27, St. Tammany Hospital Foundation, in collaboration with the NFL Players Association's New Orleans Chapter, hosted a celebrity waiter NFL Draft party at Benedict's Plantation in Mandeville. Generously presented by Gallagher, the event featured tons of food, live and silent auctions, and a whole lot of fun – all while former NFL players waited each table. Most importantly, the event raised more than \$27,000 in support of patient services at St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center. (Photos by Chuck Billiot)



During his six years with the Saints, Rich Mauti was a wideout and special teams contributor. At April's celebrity waiter event, however, he served as honorary quarterback, handling emcee duties.



Alexander and a group of Saints fans put their backfields in motion.



A pile of autographed footballs await new owners.



# For her, cancer fundraising isn't just a job. It's a calling.

By Mike Scott, [mscott@stph.org](mailto:mscott@stph.org)

Kathleen Thomas is on a mission. That's just how she operates.

The new major gifts specialist at St. Tammany Hospital Foundation is a nonprofit veteran, having previously lent her passion — and her know-how — to Odyssey House, the American Diabetes Association and, most recently, the Al Copeland Foundation, where she served as director.

After relocating to St. Tammany Parish from the south shore — and experiencing that commute — the decision to join St. Tammany Health System wasn't a difficult one.

"My whole career has been about making an impact on the community, and the health system gave me that feeling," she said.

"Even before I got a job here, I was very excited that this would be my hospital. I love that, at its core, the health system is working to impact the community, to keep the community healthy."

Shortly after joining the foundation



As a major gifts specialist at St. Tammany Hospital Foundation, Kathleen Thomas is tasked with — among other things — raising money for St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center. 'One of the unsaid things about the cancer center being here, aside from the level of care you get, is the fact you don't have to leave your parish. You don't have to go far. You can sleep in your own bed and enjoy grandma's gumbo.' (Photo by Tim San Fillippo / STHS)

team this past spring, she felt the patient experience first-hand when her son broke his foot. Even had she not been employed by the health system, she would have brought him to St. Tammany, she said, given its pediatric Emergency Department.

But the treatment he received validated her feelings about the place. "It's different," she said. "It's just not like a lot of hospitals. It has heart."

Her new role with the foundation is twofold. As her title suggests, she's here to help channel the generosity

of local donors to make sure their gifts make the most meaningful impact not just to the health system but to the donors themselves.

Also, though, she'll be working in the philanthropy office at St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, a job that isn't at all unfamiliar to her, given her work with the Al Copeland Foundation.

"I had been raising money for cancer for eight years, so it was a way to continue to fundraise in something I believe in but to shift gears and have a direct impact on the patient," she said.

"This sounds really corny, but someone asked me the other day, 'Are you loving it? I knew you in your former job and I know your heart.' I told him: As a fundraiser, we raise money and we know the impact and we can tell people about that impact, but a lot of times you don't get to see the impact or feel the impact. But when I walk through the cancer center, I see the impact. I'm talking to patients about the impact. I walked down to go to my vehicle the other day and I saw the cart of food going to the patient, I saw the hug, I saw the tears.

"I saw what the impact was. I get to see the heart. I get to feel the heart." ■

*Learn more about St. Tammany Hospital Foundation at [sthfoundation.org](http://sthfoundation.org), and contact Kathleen Thomas at [kgthomas@stph.org](mailto:kgthomas@stph.org) or (985) 338-5328.*

## Locals invited to 'Step Into the Wild, Wild West' for THE Gala 2023

Cue the "Dallas" theme song.

St. Tammany Hospital Foundation has unveiled details for THE Gala 2023, its signature annual fundraiser for patient care at St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center, and it promises to be the most eagerly awaited event since we found out who shot J.R. Ewing.

Set to take place Thursday, Oct. 5, from 7 to 10 p.m. at Tchefuncta Country Club, this year's party with a purpose will boast the theme

"Step Into the Wild, Wild West."

As always, attendees are encouraged to don appropriately glitzy duds — whether that means cocktail attire, a top-shelf Stetson or rhinestone-studded everything.

"Over the last five years, we have transported guests of THE Gala from paradise to fairy-tale wonderland to pure imagination," the foundation's Melanie Rudolph said. "This year's edition is set to be the best yet as we work to hit the \$1 million mark raised

since inception. So, get gussied up and let's party 'til the cows come home in support of cancer patients."

This year's Gala is once more presented by HUB International, with generous support from St. Tammany Health System, Ochsner Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield Louisiana, Bienville Capital Group, UnitedHealthcare, Hancock Whitney and Professional Emergency Medicine Management.

Tickets go on sale Aug. 19. Learn more at [TheGalaNorthshore.org](http://TheGalaNorthshore.org). ■

# Making an impact

Together, we can transform the future of Northshore cancer care



STHF Executive Director Nicole Suhre

**“Together, we can transform the future of cancer care and patient experience from early detection to survivorship.”**

Greetings!

As you may have seen in the news recently – and all over this issue of Heart to Heart – Ochsner Health and St. Tammany Health System have announced some very exciting news.

Ochsner Health and MD Anderson Cancer Center have entered an exciting partnership to create Ochsner MD Anderson Cancer Center in southeastern Louisiana. The fully integrated cancer program will include our own St. Tammany Cancer Center – A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center.

Our foundation and its Board of Trustees could not be more excited about this innovative partnership and how it will impact cancer care in our community.

St. Tammany Hospital Foundation is deeply proud to partner with our community to support the work of St. Tammany Health System and its partner Ochsner Health as they continue to work together to care for our Northshore community.

We are looking forward to working with you, our donors, supporters and friends, to make a meaningful impact on cancer care and the cancer journey of your neighbors, colleagues, families and loved ones. Together, we can transform the future of cancer care and patient experience from early detection to survivorship.

To learn more, visit [sthfoundation.org/cancercare](http://sthfoundation.org/cancercare). Thank you for all that you do to make a difference. Wishing all of you a wonderful rest of summer!

Sincerely,

Nicole Suhre, CFRE  
STHF executive director

## Foundation calendar Save the dates!



### THE Gala 2023

Oct. 5, 2023 | Tchefuncta Country Club

The foundation’s signature annual fundraising soirée, which has become a highlight of the local fall calendar, steps into the Wild, Wild West this year with a “cowboy chic” extravaganza. Expect a night of music, dancing, food and fun – all in support of local cancer care.

Details: (985) 898-4141 | [THEgalaNorthshore.org](http://THEgalaNorthshore.org)

### Cancer Survivors Day Celebration

Sept. 22, 2023 | St. Tammany Cancer Center, A Campus of Ochsner Medical Center

Cancer patients, survivors, and their families and loved ones are invited to this picnic celebration in the parking lot of the cancer center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Details: (985) 338-5328

### Monster Mash

Oct. 21, 2023 | Bogue Falaya Park, Covington

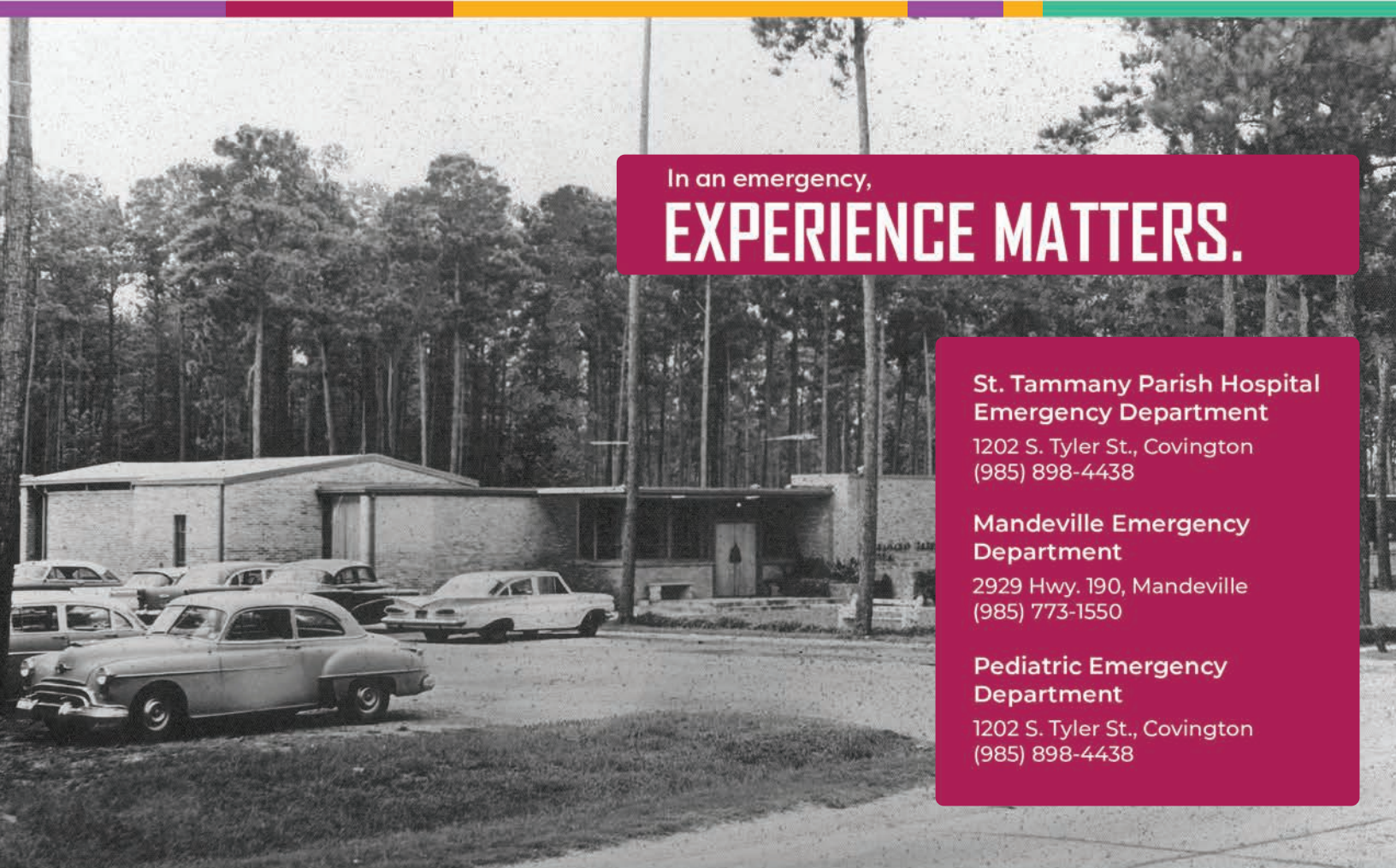
St. Tammany gets in touch with its spooky side with the 35th anniversary of the spooktacular Monster Mash presented by Metairie Bank Northshore, featuring family-friendly games, costumes, trick-or-treating and more. Proceeds benefit the STHS Parenting Center.

Details: (985) 898-4435 | [DoTheMash.org](http://DoTheMash.org)



1202 S. Tyler St., Covington, LA 70433

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In an emergency,

**EXPERIENCE MATTERS.**

**St. Tammany Parish Hospital  
Emergency Department**

1202 S. Tyler St., Covington  
(985) 898-4438

**Mandeville Emergency  
Department**

2929 Hwy. 190, Mandeville  
(985) 773-1550

**Pediatric Emergency  
Department**

1202 S. Tyler St., Covington  
(985) 898-4438

The date was Dec. 1, 1954. That was when St. Tammany Health System's flagship St. Tammany Parish Hospital first opened its doors. At 7:30 a.m., it got its first patient, a heart attack victim. He survived.

Seven decades later, St. Tammany Health System is still there for the families of the Northshore, now with three emergency rooms to serve the community, including the area's only pediatric ER.

**So breathe easy. St. Tammany is here and ready to handle whatever life throws at you and your family – just as we have been since 1954.**



THE  
COMMITTEE  
ON TRAUMA



**American Heart Association  
American Stroke Association  
CERTIFICATION**  
Meets standards for  
**Primary Stroke Center**