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For Immediate Release

State-of-the-art technology to make surgery more precise and less invasive for brain, spine and trauma patients at Sacred Heart Hospital

Eau Claire, Wis., - Later this year, brain, spine and trauma patients at Sacred Heart Hospital will benefit from some of the most advanced surgical technology available anywhere in the world – right here in Eau Claire. This coming fall, Sacred Heart Hospital will be the first in the state and the first ever of its size to have both a BrainSUITE® with IMRIS iMRI (intra-operative MRI), and BrainSUITE® iCT (intra-operative CT) smart operating suites for neurosurgery, spine and trauma patients. Local construction company Market & Johnson has been awarded the bid to build the new surgery rooms. The new surgical suites are currently under construction and are scheduled to be completed later this fall.

Sacred Heart Hospital will be one of only six hospitals in the U.S. to offer BrainSUITE® and IMRIS iMRI technology and the first hospital in the country to have both BrainSUITE iMRI and BrainSUITE iCT smart operating suites. Sacred Heart will also be the first hospital in the U.S. to offer BrainSUITE and IMRIS iMRI and iCT technology for both surgery and diagnostics.

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and computed tomography (CT) scanning are the imaging techniques that enable surgeons to precisely locate the area targeted for surgery. Until now, it was only after the conclusion of the surgery that MRI or CT scanning could determine if the surgical objective had been achieved.

With the new iMRI and iCT smart operating suites coming this fall, Sacred Heart Hospital surgeons will be able to access real-time images of their progress *during* complex brain, spine and trauma surgeries, allowing these tools to be roadmaps to guide surgical progress and to assure successful completion while the patient is still on the operating table. The iMRI smart operating suite will ensure that complete tumor removal has been achieved during brain tumor surgeries and the iCT smart operating suite will ensure that implants are ideally positioned during complex spine surgery. The iCT suite will also be used for trauma surgery.

This technology will give surgeons even greater precision and accuracy and will significantly reduce the need for follow-up surgery. This life-saving technology will be integrated with the hospital's existing BrainLAB® surgical mapping system.

"This is a quantum leap forward in the way surgery is performed," says Kamal Thapar, M.D., Ph.D., FRCS(C), a Marshfield Clinic neurosurgeon, and Director of the Brain & Spine Institute at Sacred Heart Hospital and Medical Director of Tertiary Care. "The availability of real-time images and data for each patient will make surgery more precise and less invasive, leading to better patient outcomes. In addition to pre- and post-operative images, it will be possible for us to scan during surgery, right in the operating room. With this technology, we'll be able to verify, in realtime, that the tumor has been removed as planned or if surgery must continue. This incredible system will guide our surgeons every step of the way."

The iMRI smart operating suite will use a unique ceiling-mounted track that moves the MRI

magnet to the patient rather than the patient being moved to the magnet – keeping the patient still and lessening the risk of complications that could occur when moving a patient who is in critical condition. The iMRI surgical suite will include a 1.5 Tesla high-field movable MRI scanner from IMRIS.

“The addition of a new iMRI and iCT scanners will dramatically revolutionize surgery at Sacred Heart Hospital,” says Jim Ottevaere, MD, of Eau Claire Anesthesiologists. “The surgeon can obtain high quality images during surgery to monitor the progress of the procedure and the condition of the patient. The design of the iMRI will also make it easier for the anesthesia team to ensure patient safety because the patient never needs to be moved. These features will further enhance patient outcomes.”

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Sacred Heart Hospital is an affiliate of the Hospital Sisters Health System. Since 1889 it has been meeting patient needs in western Wisconsin with the latest medical innovations and technology, together with a Franciscan whole-person healing tradition.