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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

St. John's Episcopal Hospital Launches New Doula Services Program

(FAR ROCKAWAY, NY– JULY 14, 2022) St. John's Episcopal Hospital (SJEH) is pleased to announce the addition of its new doula services program to the obstetrics & gynecology department. The program, which launched this month, provides physical, emotional and educational support to birthing parents before, during and shortly after childbirth.

Dr. Jacqueline Marecheau, SJEH's chairperson of Obstetrics & Gynecology, identified a need for doula services and collaborated with the St. John's ICARE Hospital Foundation, who began fundraising for the program through its "Giving Tuesday" campaign. With the help of Volunteer Ambassadors and more than 100 donors, the campaign raised its initial goal of \$20,000 within two hours. As a result, community members started a second campaign called "Double our Dollars for Doulas" which raised an additional \$2,300. Currently, SJEH is researching and writing grants to sustain the program.

"In the Rockaways, one in nine births are preterm and the rate of expectant mothers receiving late or no prenatal care is higher than the citywide rate. Offering Doula services can help enhance prenatal care, creating the support expectant mothers need for a successful pregnancy and beyond," stated Dr. Marecheau. She further states, "Doulas can help patients and their families feel supported and enable the patient to have a space where they feel heard."

Doulas provide educational classes, resources, referrals, on-call and virtual support to birthing parents in the community. The program additionally assists those who have experienced pregnancy loss or have high-risk pregnancies.

SJEH doulas will be on-site Tuesdays at the Margaret O. Carpenter Women's Health Center, and Thursdays at the Ambulatory Care Center within the hospital. For more information about the doula services program, call (718) 869-7919.

St. John's Episcopal Hospital is the only hospital providing emergency and ambulatory care to the densely populated, culturally and economically diverse, and medically underserved populations of the Rockaways and Five Towns in southern Queens County and southwestern Nassau County, New York. Celebrating over 110 years of community care, the 257-bed facility provides people of all faiths with comprehensive preventive, diagnostic treatment, and rehabilitative services, regardless of ability to pay. For more information, visit www.ehs.org.

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