



EPISCOPAL HEALTH SERVICES INC.

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Contact: Zuleika Benitez

Episcopal Health Services, Inc. | Public Relations and Communications Manager

(516) 246-0199, zbenitez@ehs.org

St. John’s Episcopal Hospital Receives \$150,000 from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation in Support of Maternal Health Program

Far Rockaway, NY – January 23, 2023 – St. John’s Episcopal Hospital (SJEH) was recently awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation (MCHF) to support expansion of the hospital’s Maternal Health Doula Services Program. Through this program, pre-and postnatal women in the Rockaways will have the opportunity to receive free-of-charge access to a professional doula who will assist them throughout the childbirth process; providing physical, emotional, and informational support to mothers, helping to achieve the healthiest, most satisfying birth experience possible.

Jacqueline M. Marecheau, MD FACOG, Chairperson, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology at SJEH said “There are significant public health concerns in the U.S. regarding racial and ethnic disparities where Black mothers are 3 times more likely to die in childbirth. Most modern maternal-child health practices encourage continuous support, a constant presence if you will, throughout the birthing process. In Far Rockaway, these disparities exist at a much higher rate than in other areas of Queens and New York City. Thanks to the MCHF, the women in this high acuity community have the access that is needed. It levels out the playing field in an effort to transform the social determinants of health in the Rockaways.”

To a growing number of women of color, doulas can be a potentially lifesaving advocate during childbirth. The benefits of a doula-assisted birthing experience are many and include a lesser likelihood of a C-section birth or other birth complications and a greater outcome for breastfeeding success. The doula’s role as communication advocate between mothers and health care providers also helps women to feel more comfortable advocating for themselves before, during and after labor.

The Doula Services program was first launched as a pilot program in July 2022 through a crowdfunding campaign led by the hospital’s ICARE Foundation. Funding received from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation will allow us to expand upon this program to serve a greater number of women in the Rockaways and provide the community with workshops about the advantages of doula assisted births.

“To complement its statewide grant making efforts and improve the health of underserved and vulnerable New Yorkers in a truly impactful way, this year the Foundation is continuing its commitment to strategic, long-term grants to address key issues of health equity and access as they impact low-income and vulnerable populations,” said **Kathryn Connerton, President and CEO of Lourdes Hospital in Binghamton and Chair of the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation’s Statewide Grants Committee overseeing strategic grants.**



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The MCHF grant will also support continuing education for hospital staff, including what the doula's role is in the birth process and how to create a shared decision-making process with patients and their families.

This program is an integral part of a larger initiative by SJEH to create a hub for women's health and exemplifies the hospital's intentions to continue to improve maternal health outcomes for women in the Rockaways.

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.

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers, bolster the health outcomes of vulnerable communities, eliminate barriers to care, and bridge gaps in health services. Named after a tireless advocate for immigrants, children, and the poor, the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation funds programs and initiatives across New York State that either provide direct healthcare services or address the social determinants of health. For more information, visit <https://www.cabrinihealth.org/>

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