

NEWS RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Belleville announces
the addition of a new orthopedic surgery practice**

***Signature Health Services to expand its practice from St. Louis to
form orthopedic surgery group at St. Elizabeth's.***

BELLEVILLE, Ill. (October 13, 2005) – As an early sign that the medical malpractice reform in Illinois is working, **St. Elizabeth's Hospital** in Belleville announced today that a St. Louis orthopedic surgery group is expanding its practice here.

St. Clair Orthopedics, an affiliate of **Signature Health Services, Inc.**, the largest group of orthopedic surgeons in the St. Louis area, will locate a new practice in the St. Elizabeth's Medical Office Building at 180 S. 3rd Street in Belleville, directly across the street from the main hospital campus. The group will begin seeing patients November 1.

"We are very pleased with St. Clair Orthopedics decision to join us at St. Elizabeth's Hospital and serve an important need for our community," says **Tim Brady, administrator at St. Elizabeth's Hospital**. "Our goal is to collaborate with this excellent group of physicians to provide the finest orthopedics surgery services to the Southwestern Illinois community. We believe the addition of this new practice marks a shift in how doctors view Southern Illinois, now that we've started the process of medical malpractice reform. We feel this is a sign of good things to come."

"As we see it, the Belleville area is an underserved market with tremendous opportunities," says **Jan Vest, president & CEO** of St. Louis-based Signature Health Services, Inc. "It just makes good sense to expand our affiliated orthopedics surgery services to St. Elizabeth's. The hospital recently built a state-of-the-art surgery center that will support a practice such as St. Clair Orthopedics. In partnership with the hospital, St. Clair will offer top of the line orthopedic services to the Southwest Illinois area."

Several of the orthopedic surgeons expanding their practices to the St. Elizabeth's campus include:

George Schoedinger, III, M.D. - Dr. Schoedinger is a board certified orthopedic surgeon who focuses his practice on spine and general orthopedic surgery. A graduate of the University of Oregon Medical School, he completed an internship at Baylor University and a residency at the Washington University School of Medicine.

Robert H. Sigmund, M.D. - Dr. Sigmund is a board certified orthopedic surgeon who practices general orthopedic surgery. He graduated from and served a residency at the St. Louis University School of Medicine.

Dale E. Doerr, M.D. – Dr. Doerr is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon who focuses his practice on general orthopedic surgery. A graduate of St. Louis University School of Medicine, he completed his residency and internship at St. Louis University Hospital.

Frank O. Petkovich, M.D. – Dr. Petkovich is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon who focuses his practice on general orthopedic surgery. A graduate of St. Louis University School of Medicine, he completed his residency at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, a fellowship at Tulane University in New Orleans and an internship at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Coles L’Hommedieu, M.D. - Dr. L’Hommedieu graduated from the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. He completed his surgery internship and orthopedic surgery residency at St. Louis University Hospital and focuses his practice on orthopedic surgery and general orthopedics.

Mahesh Bagwe, M.D. - Dr. Bagwe focuses his practice on foot and ankle surgery, as well as general orthopedic surgery. He is a graduate of St. Louis University School of Medicine. He completed his surgery internship and residency at the University of Chicago before completing a fellowship in reconstructive foot and ankle surgery at the Center for Orthopedic Care in Cincinnati.

About Signature Health Services, Inc.

Signature Health Services Inc., a physician-owned, multi-specialty physician group, is the largest and most comprehensive provider of orthopedic services in the St. Louis region. Comprised of more than 60 physicians, Signature Health Services was formed in 1998 as the result of several major groups of orthopedic physicians joining together to better serve their patients and community. The group has continued to grow steadily, branching out into other major practice areas including obstetrics-gynecology (OB/GYN), pain management, and allergy-immunology.

About St. Elizabeth’s Hospital

St. Elizabeth’s Hospital is a 506-bed acute care medical facility featuring a 16-suite surgery center including open-heart suites and an outpatient surgery center featuring 26 private rooms. St. Elizabeth’s maintains a Gold Seal of approval from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Facilities (JCAHO), is certified by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), is accredited by the Inter-societal Commission for the Accreditation of Vascular Labs, the Society of Chest Pain Centers, Committee on Laboratory Accreditations, and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. St. Elizabeth’s handled more than 156,000 outpatient visits and admitted nearly 13,000 patients last year. The hospital employs more than 1600 employees representing more than 40 specialties. St. Elizabeth’s also operates an UrgiCare Center at its Medical Building in O’Fallon, IL, an outpatient physical therapy center in Mascoutah, IL, and is constructing a new medical building in Monroe County, IL.

St. Elizabeth’s is one of 13 hospitals in the Hospital Sisters Health System, founded by the Hospital Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis. St. Elizabeth’s Hospital fosters values of respect, care, competence and joy.

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