For Immediate Release

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SAINT FRANCIS *CARE* AND ASCENSION HEALTH CARE NETWORK SIGN LETTER OF INTENT

(Hartford, Conn; St. Louis) January 16, 2013 – Saint Francis *Care,* Inc., and Ascension Health Care Network announced today the signing of an exclusive *Letter of Intent*, opening the way for Saint Francis *Care* to join Ascension Health Care Network, with the vision of building a statewide, clinically integrated healthcare delivery system composed of high-quality providers committed to delivering an unequaled combination of healthcare quality and community value to residents across Connecticut.

Ascension Health Care Network is an affiliate of Ascension Health Alliance, the largest Catholic health system in the nation.

"We are very pleased that we and Ascension Health Care Network are pursuing the opportunity to join together," said Christopher Dadlez, President and Chief Executive Officer, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center. "This step follows a thorough examination of how best to ensure that the people we serve in our communities continue to receive a lifetime of the very best care possible," said Dadlez.

"This is an important step in advancing the mission of both Ascension Health Care Network and Saint Francis *Care*," said Leo P. Brideau, President and CEO of Ascension Health Care Network. "We share a common goal of providing high-quality, efficient care that responds to people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs while aggressively advocating for the well-being of our patients and their families, and ensuring healthcare is available to those who are poor and vulnerable. We believe this relationship has the potential to improve healthcare at both the state and regional level."

If an agreement is finalized, Saint Francis *Care* will become part of Ascension Health Care Network, an organization dedicated to strengthening Catholic healthcare in the United States and committed to providing care for the underserved in our communities. Ascension Health Care Network is a for-profit, taxable organization.

"Saint Francis, a 116-year-old institution, has consistently demonstrated its ability to be progressive in its delivery of world-class care while maintaining its longstanding tradition of quality and compassionate care," said Karl J. Krapek, Saint Francis Board Member and Chairman of the Board's Strategic Planning Committee. "Operating from our position of financial and clinical strength, we have been evaluating how best to position Saint Francis as healthcare continues to evolve, and we have concluded that this opportunity provides us with the potential to create a powerful, statewide presence to further build on the strengths of our operations that will benefit our communities, employees, physicians and other stakeholders."

Ascension Health Care Network and Saint Francis *Care* will conduct due diligence and work toward the development of a definitive agreement in the coming months.

Specific terms of the Letter of Intent agreement are confidential.

About Ascension Health Alliance

Ascension Health Alliance is a Catholic healthcare organization dedicated to the transformation of healthcare through excellent clinical care throughout the continuum and through innovation. Its subsidiaries include Ascension Health, the nation's largest Catholic and non-profit health system. Ascension Health provides the highest quality care to all with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable. Last year Ascension Health provided $1.3 billion in care of persons living in poverty and community benefit programs. Its Mission-focused Health Ministries employ more than 122,000 associates serving in more than 1,400 locations in 21 states and the District of Columbia. Other Ascension Health Alliance subsidiaries focus on service areas including physician services, global mission support, treasury management, innovation acceleration, venture capital investing, and medical engineering. Its Ascension Health Care Network subsidiary is a joint venture with Oak Hill Capital Partners that provides an alternative funding source for the acquisition of Catholic hospitals and other healthcare provider entities.

About Ascension Health Care Network

Ascension Health Care Network is the nation's first for-profit Catholic healthcare system. It provides the capital and expertise necessary to help strengthen Catholic and other health care providers while building regional delivery networks that ensure their ability to serve their communities long into the future. It maintains and improves the health and well-being of individuals and communities by providing high quality, efficient care that responds to people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs. As it adds significant value to communities, it provides an appropriate return to those whose investments have helped create that value.

About Saint Francis *Care*

Saint Francis *Care* is an integrated healthcare delivery system established by Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897. Licensed for 617 beds and 65 bassinets, it is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other major entities of Saint Francis *Care* include The Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center, and the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research. Its services are supported by a network of five major Access Centers and eight additional medical office centers sited throughout the region. For more information, visit www.stfranciscare.com.