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Saint Mary's Hospital Opens Colleague Serenity Suite

Initiative meant to combat health care worker fatigue

WATERBURY, Conn. (August 25, 2022) Saint Mary's Hospital has opened a colleague Serenity Suite to address resiliency and wellbeing. Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed an incredible burden on health care workers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), health care workers experiencing fatigue can jeopardize their own health and safety, can suffer from burnout, and have the potential to commit patient care errors.

The Serenity Suite is modeled after the Zen Room, a newly created space at Mercy Medical Center in Springfield, a member of Trinity Health Of New England. Mercy Medical Center's resiliency team developed the idea using their collective training in psychology, psychiatry, integrative medicine, mindfulness, and wellness. Ari Kriegsman, M.D., Medical Director of Addiction Consultation Services for Mercy Medical Center says, "The use of technology to create such a full sensory experience actually 'fools' the brain into thinking that you are at the beach or in a field of flowers." According to Dr. Kriegsman, peer-reviewed studies indicate that spending just 15 minutes in a space like this can reduce an individual's stress level by 60%.

Shawna Edwards, RN, MSN, Chief Nursing Officer at Saint Mary's Hospital was the driving force behind the project at Saint Mary's Hospital, "Health care workers at every hospital in the country are struggling with some degree of pandemic-related stress. I'm so delighted with the way this place of respite turned out. I know our colleagues will benefit from it greatly."

The Suite features a full sensory relaxation experience with HD video nature scenes, surround sound, mood lighting, and essential oil scent diffusion. Participants can create their own stress-reducing experience and location – at a beach, near a waterfall, or out in the forest by using a Google Assistant to select their preference. The Serenity Suite also features massage chairs.

Saint Mary's new Serenity Suite was designed and created by Studio Elsewhere, a New York-based firm that uses evidence-based and data-driven practices to develop virtual and physical interventions that promote brain health by easing the impact of trauma while also relieving stress and anxiety. Funding for the Serenity Suite was made possible by the Saint Mary's Hospital Foundation. By swiping their badge, colleagues may access the Suite 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

About Saint Mary's Hospital

Saint Mary's Hospital is a Catholic, not-for-profit, acute care, community teaching hospital that has served Greater Waterbury since 1909. In 2016, Saint Mary's Hospital became part of Trinity Health Of New England, an integrated health care delivery system that is a member of Trinity Health, Livonia, Michigan, one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation serving communities in 22 states. Licensed for 347 beds, Saint Mary's is designated as a Level II Trauma Center, offers award-winning cardiac and stroke care and houses the region's only pediatric emergency care unit. As the leading provider of surgical services in Greater Waterbury, Saint Mary's was the first to introduce the daVinci® Robotic Surgery System. The hospital's satellites and affiliates extend from Waterbury to Wolcott, Cheshire, Naugatuck, Southbury, Prospect and Watertown. Visit trinityhealthofne.org for more information and follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter at @SaintMarysCT.

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