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New electronic interface will ultimately save more lives

DALLAS, October 12, 2018 – Southwest Transplant Alliance (STA), one of the largest organ procurement organizations (OPOs) in the United States -- together with CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital - *Tyler*, in Texas, and Transplant Connect, a Santa Monica, California-based medical software provider -- has launched a first-of-its-kind electronic interface that will help maximize every opportunity for organ and tissue donation, while also optimizing hospital and OPO staff resources.

On October 9, 2018, STA and CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital - *Tyler* launched the interface between the hospital's electronic medical record (EMR) system from Epic and the iReferralSM Platform, which was developed by Transplant Connect and implemented in close collaboration with STA and CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital - *Tyler*. This interface automatically notifies STA of any potential organ and/or tissue donor at the hospital and delivers key initial referral information. "Not only will this allow a timely notification, but it will also allow the nurses to focus on the patient, rather than being away from the bedside, tied up on the phone to relay important information to Southwest Transplant," said Mike Breen Eckhard, MSN, RN-BC, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Informatics Officer, CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Health System. "This is a perfect example of how technology can work for the nurses, rather

than forcing them to work with technology. I'm proud of the team that has worked so hard on this project and the impact it will have on lives of patients."

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), requires all hospitals to refer all deaths to the local OPO. In the past, this has been done through manual, time-consuming phone calls from hospital nursing staff, who are often extremely busy tending to a multitude of tasks and treating patients. With iReferral, the OPO is automatically notified using the exact same clinical criteria used by nurses to make donor notifications by phone. But with iReferral, the process occurs seamlessly and in real-time as the nurse is entering patient data into the hospital's EMR system. As a result, the time and effort otherwise expended by hospital nursing staff making referral phone calls can be redirected to direct patient care within the hospital.

It is this relay of information that makes it possible for the OPO to take immediate action – whether to send team members to the hospital to evaluate the patient or to inform hospital staff that the patient, due to the information that has been shared through iReferral, is not medically suitable for donation.

"This new system is a game changer," said Patti Niles, CEO and President of STA. "Because iReferral seamlessly automates the referral process, it virtually eliminates the possibility of human error and risk of delay. This is incredibly significant because less than one percent of all people who die can be organ donors so it's a matter of life and death that we maximize the donation opportunity."

"As an organization we want to maximize the effectiveness of the donation process to make the biggest positive impact that we can, and the referral process is the biggest component of that," said Shelly Welch, MBA, BSN, RN, NEA-BC, Chief Nursing Officer of CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital - Tyler. "The process is extensive, but timely referrals are critical and make an enormous difference. This update in the system allows nurses and team members to work with the families at the right time to solidify a donation. It removes the burden of time that the nurse was previously spending in making the referral and has a direct impact on the frequency and success of these lifesaving transplants. This is, simply put, the very best use of technology to reduce wasted steps and save more lives."

John Piano, Transplant Connect's CEO, added, "With the goal of increasing donation and liberating hospital resources, our team has been developing this innovative technology for a number of years now, and we couldn't have had better initial launch partners than the bold pioneers at STA and CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital - Tyler in order to make this transformational breakthrough possible."

Focusing heavily on quality, reliability and security, STA, Transplant Connect and CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital - Tyler conducted extended and comprehensive testing of the iReferral System and expect it to generate impactful results, both in terms of improving and increasing organ, tissue and eye donation and freeing up hospital nursing resources. This innovative system will be monitored closely in the upcoming months to ensure the process works seamlessly in anticipation of a broader national rollout with additional STA hospitals as well as with other OPOs and hospitals.

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About Southwest Transplant Alliance:

For more than 40 years, STA has been saving lives by recovering donated organs for individuals awaiting a lifesaving transplant. In April of 2017, STA began recovering tissue to improve lives. STA is among the largest of 58 federally designated, nonprofit organ procurement organizations (OPOs). Founded in 1974, STA has facilitated more than 24,000 organs for recovery and enhanced the lives of tens of thousands of people. STA is a member of the United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS) and is accredited by the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO). The organization serves communities in North Texas, Beaumont, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Galveston, Midland/Odessa, Temple, Wichita Falls and Tyler. For more information, go to www.organ.org. Sign up to be an organ donor today at www.DonateLifeTexas.org.

About Transplant Connect:

Santa Monica, California-based Transplant Connect is the world's leading software provider to the organ, tissue and eye donation and transplantation field. Recipient of the Microsoft Life Sciences Innovation Award, Transplant Connect's secure, cloud-based iTransplantSM and iReferralSM Platforms are utilized by OPOs, tissue banks, eye banks and transplant centers in the U.S., Canada and Australia. Nearly 75% of all organ, tissue and eye transplants in the United States are facilitated by organizations utilizing Transplant Connect's systems. For more information, go to www.transplantconnect.com.

About CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital:

CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Health System includes CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospitals - Tyler, South Tyler, Jacksonville, Winnsboro and Sulphur Springs, the CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Louis and Peaches Owen Heart Hospital - Tyler, CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Rehabilitation Hospital a partner of Encompass Health, Tyler ContinueCARE Hospital at CHRISTUS Mother Frances Hospital, a long-term acute care facility, and CHRISTUS Trinity Clinic. CHRISTUS Trinity Clinic is the area's preferred multi-specialty medical group, with more than 400 Physicians and Advanced Practice Providers representing 36 specialties in 34 locations serving Northeast Texas across 41 counties. For more information on services available through CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Health System, visit www.christustmf.org.