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Clogged Arteries in Legs Pose Major Health Risk
HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital's Wound Care Center Recognizes
Peripheral Artery Disease Awareness Month in September

(HIGHLAND, IL) – September is Peripheral Artery Disease Awareness month. Peripheral artery disease affects as many as 12 million people in the United States, and increases in prevalence with age. One in every eight Americans over age 60 have PAD but only 25% of the general population is aware of the disease, which is why HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland's Wound Care Center wants to educate the community on this critical health issue.

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) develops when arteries become completely or partially blocked with plaque deposits that limit blood flow to legs. Just like clogged arteries in the heart, clogged arteries in the legs increase the risk of heart attack, stroke or even death. Atherosclerosis (plaque buildup) in the legs does not always cause symptoms, so many people can have PAD and not know it. People who do experience symptoms, such as pain or cramping in the legs, often do not report them, believing they are a natural part of aging or due to another cause.

Common risk factors include high cholesterol, smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, inactivity, atherosclerosis and age. As many as six million people with diabetes are affected by PAD, making it one of the primary co-morbidities of diabetes. Chronic toe and foot sores are common in people with PAD, as are cramping, numbness, weakness or heaviness in the leg muscles. Those who have any of the risk factors for PAD should ask their health care professional about PAD. A physician can check for signs of the disease with a simple test of pulses in the feet.

"While some with PAD do not experience symptoms, people should be aware of certain factors that put them more at risk," said Dr. Jose Diaz, Jr., medical director of HSHS St. Joseph's Wound Care Center. "Smokers are four times at greater risk, African Americans are more than twice as likely to have PAD, and one in every three people over the age of 50 with diabetes is likely to have the disease."

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HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital's Wound Care Center recommends the following action steps to help manage PAD:

- Make lifestyle changes such as quitting smoking, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol numbers.
- Develop healthy eating habits and an exercise plan.
- Exercise to help increase the circulation and reduce pain in the lower extremities. Walking, hiking and bike riding are good exercise options. A personal trainer can help tailor a custom workout plan that best fits a person's needs.
- Consult with a physician about which medications may help PAD and if they are needed.
- Conduct regular foot exams to identify any open sores early.

If you are experiencing symptoms of PAD, the physicians at the Prairie Heart Institute at HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital can help determine if you would benefit from further testing. Talk with your doctor about your symptoms and ordering a test for PAD at the Prairie Heart Institute at St. Joseph's. In some severe cases of PAD, surgery may be needed to open arteries that have narrowed.

For more information about PAD and treating chronic wounds, contact HSHS St. Joseph's Wound Care Center at 618-651-2502. HSHS St. Joseph's Wound Care Center provides specialized treatment for chronic or non-healing wounds. The Wound Care Center offers state-of-the-art treatments including debridement, dressing selection, special shoes and patient education. One of their specialized treatments for specific conditions is Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy.

For more information on St. Joseph's Wound Care Center, visit the hospital's web site at stjosephshighland.org. HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital Highland is part of the Southern Illinois Division of Hospital Sisters Health System, which also includes HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon, HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital in Effingham, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital in Breese, and HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville.

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About Hospital Sisters Health System

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high quality, Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our 15 Local Systems and physician practices in Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville, and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan, and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit www.hshs.org. For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit www.hospitalsisters.org.

About Healogics, Inc.

Headquartered in Jacksonville, Fla., Healogics is the nation's leading provider of advanced wound care services. Healogics and its affiliated companies manage a nationwide network of Wound Care Centers® and cared for over 300,000 new patients last year through an integrated network of partner hospitals and Wound Care Centers, academic medical centers, and other post-acute sites. Healogics utilizes evidence-

based standards of care to chronic wound healing to treat an underserved and growing patient population. For more information, please visit www.healogics.com.