



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Major expansion of local hospital to open in late May Triples patient room capacity, doubles ER capacity New Operating Rooms, Radiology**

*(St. Tammany Parish, La., 5-4-09)* – Nearly two years after first breaking ground, a four-story patient tower is almost complete. This expansion is so large, it will change the face of Louisiana Medical Center & Heart Hospital, which opened in 2003 as a hospital to specialize in cardiac and spinal care but has evolved after Hurricane Katrina impacted its communities into a general, acute care hospital.

When it opens, the patient tower will have space to more than triple the number of patient rooms. It will also double the Emergency Department's number of rooms, filling an urgent need in the North Shore area. In addition, it will hold three new operating rooms to meet current needs of the community for more surgical access. It will also expand LMCHH's radiology facilities, including equipment located specifically to speed diagnosis and treatment of ER patients.

"This is a significant investment in serving the healthcare needs of our communities. Our parent company, MedCath Corporation and our physician partners have invested \$40 million just for the construction and equipping of the initial patient rooms and all the service areas in the tower," said President/Chief Executive Officer Donnie Frederic. "Opening day, we'll have equipped and staffed 39 new patient rooms. Plus we'll have an additional 40 rooms on the third floor that we plan to put into service to keep up with community need. When we outgrow even those additional rooms, we'll equip and open the remaining rooms on the fourth floor."

The 119 rooms available in the patient tower more than triples the number of beds from the 58 that LMCHH has had since it opened in 2003.

"Even though we've been an acute care hospital for a number of years now, it's not as well known in our communities as we'd like it to be," Frederic said. "It's vital that people who live in our service area know what each hospital offers – that way they make the most informed choice about where to get their healthcare.

"People already respect us as one of the top five percent of cardiac hospitals in the

country in terms of patient outcome. We want them to learn we offer that same level of patient-focused care to people who need everything from general surgery to gastroenterology, from neurology to orthopedics.”

To meet current urgent needs in St. Tammany Parish, the LMCHH Emergency Department is being doubled to a 20-bed center, Frederic said. “Increasingly in this Parish, there are simply not enough beds in the ERs of our hospitals to efficiently handle all the ambulance cases. We’re adding 10 more beds to the mix – and right in the center of the Parish so it’s easily accessible to ambulances responding to emergencies anywhere,” he said. “Our Emergency Department has always been full service and, of course, open 24/7. Plus, it’s the only nationally accredited Chest Pain Center in our service area.”

For more information about LMCHH, its services and physicians, please call 985-690-7500.

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**Hi-res images available upon request**

**About Louisiana Medical Center & Heart Hospital**

*Opened in 2003 in the heart of St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana Medical Center & Heart Hospital (LMCHH) is an acute care facility noted nationally for its excellence in the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease as well as disease and injury affecting the spine. The hospital provides comprehensive inpatient and outpatient care and a full-service Emergency Department that is also a nationally accredited Chest Pain Center and the only one on the North Shore. It serves patients from Tangipahoa, Washington and St. Tammany Parishes in Louisiana and from southern Mississippi counties.*