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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Xavier University of Louisiana and Ochsner Health Partner to Create College of Medicine and Pursue Health, Educational Equity

The Partnership Will Create a New, Standalone College of Medicine in New Orleans, Training the Health Care Professionals of Tomorrow

New Orleans, La. – Xavier University of Louisiana (Xavier) and Ochsner Health (Ochsner) today announced an agreement to establish a joint College of Medicine. The two institutions will create a strong physician pipeline that addresses longstanding inequities within the nation's health care system and builds the health care workforce of the future. By anchoring their partnership with a College of Medicine, Xavier and Ochsner affirm their legacy of advancing health care excellence and education for the next generation, bringing new opportunities to marginalized populations in Louisiana and the United States.

To launch the College of Medicine, Ochsner and Xavier will form a nonprofit corporation, create a new curriculum and use facilities, personnel, and administrative processes of both institutions. The new College of Medicine will be governed by a board of directors nominated by Ochsner and Xavier, with each institution appointing an equal number of directors.

This initiative builds on a long-standing partnership between Ochsner and Xavier that dates to the early 1980s, when Ochsner and Xavier's College of Pharmacy came together to offer more clinical training sites for pharmacy students. Xavier's College of Pharmacy is the oldest in Louisiana and has for years been among the top in the nation in producing African American graduates with Doctor of Pharmacy degrees.

"Our work with Ochsner and other partners who hold close to their hearts a vision of healing a broken world is a testament to Xavier's mission to promote a more just and humane society," **said Dr. Reynold Verret, President of Xavier University of Louisiana.** "Xavier was bestowed that mission by our founders St. Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament almost a century ago. Our dedication to preparing more Black health care professionals in our

fight against health inequity is our answer to the call of our nation's critical need and makes their legacy proud."

XULA and Ochsner: A Legacy of Collaboration

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged the world and disproportionately affected people of color, highlighting health disparities faced by historically marginalized communities. Ochsner Health and Xavier again forged partnerships to improve health equity through [new graduate programs](#) in health sciences and the establishment of the [Ochsner Health and Xavier University Institute for Health Equity and Research \(OXIHER\)](#). A few years before, Xavier and Ochsner also worked to improve diversity within the health sciences through a memorandum of understanding to establish a new Physician Assistant (PA) Program. In May 2022, Ochsner and Xavier celebrated the first graduating class of 37 students in the full-time graduate PA Program, which leads to a master's degree in health sciences and trains the next generation of providers to make a meaningful impact on health care.

"Ochsner has a long and rich history of excellence in medical education, and we are honored to continue our work with Xavier to improve the health of our state and region," said **Pete November, CEO of Ochsner Health**. "The Xavier medical students will get outstanding clinical training in our integrated health care system, and this significant expansion of our partnership with Xavier demonstrates our commitment to training the next generation of health care providers to solve the critical shortage of physicians in the United States and meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve."

In 2022, Xavier [became an integral advisory board partner for Healthy State by 2030](#), an ambitious plan to lift Louisiana off the bottom of national health rankings. Collectively, partners across multiple sectors and industries from across the state are committed to comprehensive public health initiatives, education, and outreach.

"Investing in education, training and workforce development is critical to building a healthier state and stronger communities. Our partnership with Xavier furthers our Healthy State mission of enhancing diversity among health care providers, which has been linked to better care for diverse communities of our region and throughout the nation," said **Dr. Leonardo Seoane, MD, FACP, Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer for Ochsner Health**. "We must work together to solve the challenges faced in our health care workforce and ensure communities across the country have access to the highest quality of care."

Closing the National and Local Workforce Gap

For decades, Xavier University of Louisiana has produced more African American students and students of color who achieve medical degrees and doctorates in the health sciences than any other higher education institution in the nation. Ochsner, the largest academic health care system in Louisiana, has a long history of training medical students, residents, and fellows. Ochsner is invested in excellent health care, workforce development and education of communities throughout the Gulf South. The institutions are uniquely positioned to co-lead efforts in closing the health care workforce gap.

“With their historic agreement to establish a College of Medicine at one of the nation’s top HBCUs, Xavier and Ochsner have heeded the call to shape the health of the state, the country, and the world for generations to come,” said Dr. Anne McCall, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost of Xavier University of Louisiana.

Research shows an urgent need for an HBCU College of Medicine now, [as demand for doctors is expected to grow](#). Louisiana is projected to rank third nationally for a shortage of physicians by 2030, [according to a Human Resources for Health analysis](#). Representation of African Americans within medicine lags, as they comprise 5% of the nation’s physicians -- although Black and African American populations account for 13% of U.S. residents. A new College of Medicine with Xavier, a high-ranking HBCU, and Ochsner, a high-performing academic health system with experience in training medical students, will result in representation among medical practitioners with excellent health care training, which is critical to bettering health outcomes by increasing quality of care, access, and patient trust in their health care providers.

To learn more, please visit www.xula.edu and www.ochsner.org.

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About Xavier University of Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana, America’s only historically Black and Catholic University, is ranked among the top three HBCUs (historically Black colleges and universities) in the nation. Recognized as a national leader in STEM and health sciences, Xavier produces more African American students who graduate from medical schools each year than any other university in the United States. Additionally, Xavier’s College of Pharmacy is also among the top producers of African American pharmacists in the country.

Established in 1925, by Saint Katharine Drexel and the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a place for African American and Native Americans to receive quality education, Xavier has since expanded its programs in art, business, education, biological sciences, chemistry, pharmacy and political science. More recent additions in robotics, bioinformatics, engineering, data science, neuroscience and genetics, in addition to new STEM-based master’s programs, have provided Xavier students (2815 undergraduates and 787 graduates) an unbeatable combination of traditional classroom study, hands-on research, service-learning opportunities and life experiences. Xavier students collaborate with world-renowned faculty, who are experts in their fields, to produce award-winning research and notable work. The winning Xavier formula is to provide students with a well-balanced curriculum and an environment that nurtures their intellect and feeds their souls, thereby facilitating a more just and humane society for all. For more information about Xavier University of Louisiana, visit us online at www.xula.edu or contact Regi Reyes at (504) 520-5240 or rreyes@xula.edu.

About Ochsner Health

Ochsner Health is an integrated healthcare system with a mission to Serve, Heal, Lead, Educate and Innovate. Celebrating 80 years in 2022, it leads nationally in cancer care, cardiology, neurosciences, liver and heart transplants and pediatrics, among other areas. Ochsner is consistently named both the top hospital and top children’s hospital in Louisiana by U.S. News & World Report. The academic not-for-profit organization is inspiring healthier lives and stronger communities. Its focus is on preventing

diseases and providing patient-centered care that is accessible, affordable, convenient and effective. Ochsner Health pioneers new treatments, deploys emerging technologies and performs groundbreaking research, including over 700 clinical studies. It has more than 36,000 employees and over 4,600 employed and affiliated physicians in over 90 medical specialties and subspecialties. It operates 47 hospitals and more than 370 health and urgent care centers across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and the Gulf South; and its cutting-edge Connected Health digital medicine program is caring for patients beyond its walls. In 2021, Ochsner Health treated more than 1 million people from every state and 75 countries. As Louisiana's top healthcare educator, Ochsner Health and its partners educate thousands of healthcare professionals annually. Ochsner has 31 ACGME accredited residency and fellowship program training over 330 doctors annually. Ochsner for the past 14 years has had been a clinical medical school in partnership with the University of Queensland graduating over 750 medical students. Ochsner's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion empowers the Ochsner team to drive innovation and excellent outcomes through cultural competence. We focus our efforts in key areas that correlate back to our core values of Patient First, Compassion, Integrity, Excellence, Teamwork, and Inclusivity. To support the needs of every individual on the Ochsner team, the healthcare system supports ten resource groups that represent key interests across our organization, including African Americans Building and Leading Equality. Ochsner Resource Groups are voluntary, employee-led groups that focus on the patient experience, community outreach, mentoring, recruitment, and education. To learn more, visit www.ochsner.org.

