



CASE STUDY: Ochsner's Partnership with St. Bernard Parish Hospital

-Robert W.
St. Bernard Parish Hospital
Nurse Leader

With Ochsner, community hospitals succeed.

Ochsner Health has a strong track record of welcoming mission-driven partners to our health system to ensure and expand access to local services, invest in better technology and facilities, improve quality and control healthcare costs. As part of a connected healthcare system, our hospitals and caregivers are empowered to make a greater impact on the communities we serve.

With Ochsner, more than **885,000 patients received care** at more than 2,450,000 clinic visits in 2020. Everything we do is driven by our mission, vision and values. Our patients are our friends, families and neighbors – we will always do whatever we can to provide excellent care, support patients in their wellness journey, and serve as their most trusted healthcare partner in all things.

With Ochsner, local hospitals have been able to keep their doors open, ensuring more communities in our region have access to high-quality healthcare services close to home. Hospitals want to join Ochsner because they have an opportunity to grow and expand services and invest in better facilities, technology and care.

Read on for a case study about how Ochsner Health partnered with St. Bernard Parish Hospital, ensuring that patients in the area continued to receive the healthcare services they need.

Background

St. Bernard Parish Hospital (SBPH) is a critical resource to the more than 48,000 citizens of St. Bernard Parish in Louisiana. In August 2005, Chalmette Medical Center, the parish's only hospital, flooded and was destroyed during Hurricane Katrina, leaving the parish without a hospital for nearly seven years.

In August 2012, SBPH, a community-owned facility, opened its doors, bringing critical healthcare services back to the community. However, it wasn't long before the hospital experienced problems with billings and collections, leading to millions of dollars in losses. By late 2015, SBPH had accumulated more than \$59 million in long-term debt. As a result, SBPH faced potential closure due to significant negative cashflow.

That's when parish officials reached out to Ochsner Health, which had a track record of successfully managing hospitals while increasing access to care, about the possibility of partnership that would keep vital healthcare services in the community. Ochsner first signed a cooperative agreement to assist with the hospital's operations in October 2016 before reaching a partnership agreement in 2017 to run the day-to-day operations of the hospital under the oversight of the SBPH Board. Within 90 days, the health system found more than \$2 million in operational savings.

With Ochsner, SBPH and its clinics kept their doors open, preserving and expanding access to high-quality healthcare services for residents of St. Bernard Parish and the surrounding area.

State and local officials praised the agreement with Ochsner, stating it was the beginning of a new chapter for SBPH and signified a commitment to building a stronger and healthier Louisiana. The partnership with Ochsner meant the hospital would continue to provide critical primary and specialty care to the St. Bernard Community, while also growing access to even more service lines. In November 2017, Ochsner expanded services by opening a new healthcare center at the SBPH Medical Office Building with a multi-specialty clinic and women's services.



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Immediate Impact

First Year of Partnership

\$5.7 million
invested in Epic

the best-in-class electronic medical record, enhancing coordination of care between SBPH and Ochsner Health.

\$325K in
building improvements
to make immediate
repairs

20+
providers
recruited

- + Recruited more than 20 providers to deliver primary and specialty care in areas such as psychiatric, cardiology, endocrinology, general surgery, hepatology, hospital medicine, neurology, ob/gyn, orthopedics, pain management and urology.
- + Reduced operating costs in line with patient revenue, allowing us to lower the overall cost of care and invest in new services and programs while avoiding layoffs.
- + **1st merit increases and market adjustments** for staff since 2012.
- + **5 new telehealth programs** implemented: Telestroke, TelePsych, Teleneurology, eICU (critical care) and hospital medicine.
- + Opened multi-specialty health center in SBPH Medical Office Building in 2017 with women's services and multi-specialty care.
- + Increased appropriate Emergency Department visits by 16% with improved patient throughput and decreased wait times.
- + Achieved a positive cash flow for the first time in the history of the hospital.
- + Added **50 new jobs**.
- + Extended hours of operation for services, including evening hours for imaging and lab services.
- + Developed and deployed quality programs, including antibiotic stewardship.
- + Established Patient Advisory Committee.
- + Developed SBPH Volunteer program to provide support to families while their loved ones undergo surgery.
- + Facilitated a community focus group to listen to the voice of the community.
- + Established new support programs for patients, including outpatient diabetes education, wound care services, smoking cessation programs and health screenings.
- + Served as inaugural sponsor of the Hot Air Balloon Festival, reaching 30,000 people across the region.
- + 0 negative findings in external audits since partnership with Ochsner Health.
- + Executive leadership participation on the St. Bernard Parish Economic Development Commission and in multiple community and business organizations.



Partnership leads to continued success, expanded access and additional services.

Today, with Ochsner, SBPH continues its mission to provide high quality, comprehensive, cost-effective healthcare services to the residents of St. Bernard Parish and beyond. They live up to their values of putting patients first, compassion, integrity, excellence and teamwork.

Since partnering with Ochsner, SBPH:

A in Leap Frog
Patient
Safety Grade

\$10 million
in capital improvements

Increased minimum wage to

\$12/hour

the first healthcare organization
in the region to do so

Accreditation from
The Joint Commission

Continued commitment
to quality

- + Provided care to a growing number of patients served with a 35.8% increase year-over-year, with more than **140,000 patients served since 2017**
- + Recruited providers to increase specialty services in Endocrinology, Psychology, Cardiology, Plastic Surgery, Pulmonology, Orthopedics, Ocular Plastic Surgery, Urology, Podiatry, GI, Pediatrics, Women's Services and Primary Care
- + Enhanced and implemented additional telehealth and digital medicine technologies
- + Focused on patient safety, implementing the latest technology such as the Xenex LightStrike Germ-Zapping Robots, which have reduced the risk of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs)
- + Extended hours of operation including evening hours for patients receiving lab services to provide more convenient care options
- + Provided additional support groups in areas including Bariatrics and Joint Replacement
- + Increased number of patients receiving services year-over-year, including:
 - + Emergency Department visits: 13%
 - + Imaging Tests: 26%
 - + Lab Tests: 38%
 - + Rehab Procedures: 51%
- + Achieved operational excellence, including financial stability, ensuring SBPH will provide care for generations to come
- + Built a strong and engaged workforce that offers a unique working environment, including:
 - + Access to a wide range of learning and professional development opportunities not usually seen at independent hospitals of its size
 - + A dedicated clinical education team that provides programs to continuously review, update and offer new and exciting professional development opportunities
 - + Increased employee engagement above the national average
 - + Encouraging employees to pursue and earn advanced certification
- + Continued workforce development programs to ensure a talent pipeline well into the future:
 - + Implementation of the Medical Assistant and Patient Access Representative Academy
 - + Partnering with Chalmette High School Summer Internship Program, providing students experience in Lab, Pharmacy and Nursing
 - + Member of Chalmette Refinery Advisory Council
- + Recognized by St. Bernard Chamber of Commerce as Healthcare Hero of the Community
- + CEO recognized as New Orleans Biz 500 Leader (2021), and has received Nunez Community College Chancellor's Vision Award (2020), City Business Healthcare Hero (2019) and Women of the Year (2018)

Community Impact through a Global Pandemic

With Ochsner, SBPH successfully cared for patients in the community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic:

- + Administered more than 18,500 vaccines in the community
- + Performed nearly 14,000 in-hospital COVID-19 tests
- + Developed and administered monoclonal antibody treatment to more than 400 patients under Emergency Use Authorization
- + Maintained steady supply of Personal Protective Equipment for staff
- + Increased capacity to treat COVID-19 and other patients with the addition of 40 state-of-the-art MedSurg and ICU beds
- + Invested \$5 million in technology advancements such as ED stretchers with Zoom and an integrated, hospital-wide Cardiac Monitoring System
- + Added and updated equipment, including:
 - + High-resolution CT Scanner
 - + Mobile X-ray units
 - + Respirationics V60 Hospital Ventilators
 - + Portable Ultrasound System
 - + Portable Echocardiogram Machine

