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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Akron Children's recognized with national award for diversity nursing efforts**

**AKRON, Ohio (April 11, 2019)** – Akron Children's Hospital's efforts to increase diversity among its nurses has earned a national nursing award.

Chief Operating Officer Lisa Aurilio accepted the Prism Diversity Award from the American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) during the organization's national conference April 11 in San Diego. The Prism award recognizes an organization or individual who is a leader in advancing diversity efforts within the nursing profession, health care organization or community. The American Nurses Credentialing Center sponsored the award.

Akron Children's was honored in part for the Assuring Success with a Commitment to Enhance Nurse Diversity (ASCEND) program.

"Akron Children's Hospital is honored to be recognized by the American Organization of Nurse Executives for the efforts of its nurse leaders and nursing team to advance the diversity of our nursing workforce," Aurilio said. "Our clinical team understands the importance of providing culturally sensitive care to our patients and families, and the ASCEND program is an effort to ensure that our nursing workforce reflects our patients and the communities we serve."

The hospital created the ASCEND program in 2015 in response to national statistics that show a need for more diversity in nursing. A recent study from the National County of State Boards of Nursing found that 93 percent of registered nurses are female and 83 percent are Caucasian. Students who participate in the ASCEND program must be from a minority group, male or first generation college student, all of which are underrepresented groups in nursing.

"Akron Children's Hospital's ASCEND program embodies the AONE Guiding Principles for Diversity in Health Care Organizations, which is the basis for the Prism award," said Robyn Begley, AONE CEO. "The program is an exemplar of how hospitals and health organizations allocate resources to implement a diversity program and partner with nursing schools to recruit and retain a diverse workforce, reflecting the organization's patient population."

The 10-week summer internship, designed for nursing students entering their senior year, provides students professional development opportunities, hands-on nurse-related activities and the potential for future employment. Eligible students must be pursuing their degree through one of the program's partner nursing schools that include Ashland University, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State University, Hiram College, Kent State University, Malone University, Notre Dame College, University of Akron, University of Mount Union, Ursuline College, Walsh University and Youngstown State University.

Last year, the KeyBank Foundation awarded the ASCEND program \$1 million over five years to expand the number of interns who can participate in the program as well as provide tuition support to participants for their senior year.

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### **About Akron Children's Hospital**

Akron Children's Hospital is ranked among the best pediatric hospitals by U.S. News & World Report. Founded in 1890, Akron Children's is an independent children's hospital with two hospital campuses in northeast Ohio and more than 60 primary, specialty and urgent care locations. Akron Children's collaborates with many community partners to bring its neonatal and pediatric expertise to patients in their healthcare facilities. The hospital, which has more than a 1 million patient visits annually, also cares for children through its home care and school health programs, and advances pediatric health care through education, advocacy, community service and research.