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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Salem Health and Santiam finalize affiliation to ensure long-term stability and more accessible healthcare

SALEM – September 1, 2026 – Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics today announced the completion of its affiliation with Santiam Hospital and Clinics, formalizing a partnership that will stabilize and strengthen healthcare and access for the communities both hospitals serve.

The affiliation was granted an emergency exemption from the Oregon Health Authority's review and was approved by the Oregon Department of Justice in August. Contract details were finalized and approved Aug. 31 by the two organizations.

"I am thrilled to welcome Santiam Hospital and Clinics to the Salem Health system family," said Cheryl Nester Wolfe, MSN RN, President and CEO of Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics. "For decades, Santiam has provided exceptional care, built trusted relationships and made a lasting difference in the lives of the communities they serve. With this affiliation, we will build an even stronger future together."

Nester Wolfe will remain as President and CEO of the overall Salem Health system, which includes West Valley Hospital in Polk County, Santiam Hospital and Clinics throughout the system. The Salem Health system now covers three counties: Marion, Linn and Polk, serving the heartland of Oregon.

Maggie Hudson will remain as the Santiam CEO and join the Salem Health system's executive leadership council and report to Cheryl Nester Wolfe. Additionally, two Santiam board members will join the Salem Health board of trustees. A Santiam advisory board will advise the system on various matters.

“This affiliation will strengthen and stabilize healthcare for the Santiam Canyon and surrounding communities,” Hudson said. “By joining Salem Health, we are ensuring that local families continue to have health care close to home.

The affiliation comes after months of work between the two healthcare systems, including public input from the communities they serve. Key priorities included continued access to high-quality healthcare close to home.

Under the terms of the agreement, Santiam’s staff members will become Salem Health employees, and Salem will invest millions of dollars into improvements of Santiam’s healthcare infrastructure. Nester Wolfe and Hudson stressed that there will be no change in the delivery of high-quality care across the hospitals.

“Our top priority remains the same: supporting our clinicians and staff while providing the compassionate, high-quality care our communities know and deserve,” Nester Wolfe said. “We believe that healthcare begins close to home. For many individuals and families, their relationship with a trusted primary care provider is the cornerstone of their health and wellness journey, and maintaining access to those providers in our local communities remains a priority.”

Both healthcare leaders noted that the affiliation will create opportunities to enhance patient care by supporting and expanding access to local primary care, improving access to specialty care, and investing in technology and infrastructure.

“This affiliation is critical to the long-term sustainability of local healthcare while preserving the relationships, values, and community focus that have always defined us,” Nester Wolfe said.

Salem Health Hospitals & Clinics

Salem Health Hospitals & Clinics, a nonprofit health system governed by a volunteer board of trustees, offers exceptional care to people in and around Oregon’s Mid-Willamette Valley. It comprises hospitals in Salem and Dallas. Salem Hospital in Salem is Oregon’s largest hospital and a Level II Trauma Center. West Valley Hospital in Dallas is a 25-bed critical access hospital with a 24-hour emergency department. Salem Health also has a medical group of primary and specialty care providers, plus other affiliated services. Salem Health has more than 6,400 employees and a medical staff of more than 875 physicians and advanced practice providers.

Santiam Hospital & Clinics

Santiam Hospital & Clinics is a community-based nonprofit, acute-care 40-bed hospital, with an ER open 24/7 and owns and operates its ambulance program. The hospital is in the eastern region of Mid-Willamette Valley in Stayton, Oregon operating 13 medical clinics serving the Santiam Canyon in Marion and Linn counties. The hospital and clinics are governed by a volunteer board of directors. Santiam Hospital & Clinics serves more than 50,000 residents and employs more than 700 staff, including over 70 medical staff who are committed to excellence in community-based care.