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# Advanced Orthopedic Specialists Joins St. Francis Family

SEPTEMBER 30TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Cape Girardeau, Missouri - Saint Francis Healthcare System is pleased to welcome a new specialty practice to Saint Francis Medical Partners: Advanced Orthopedic Specialists.

“We are fortunate to be partnering with this established orthopedic practice and its highly experienced specialists,” says Steven C. Bjelich, FACHE-D, President and Chief Executive Officer at Saint Francis Healthcare System. “By bringing an orthopedic specialty group to join Saint Francis Medical Partners, we are able to expand our clinical integrated network to patients in the five-state region we serve.”

Located in Cape Girardeau, Advanced Orthopedic Specialists provides patients with expert diagnosis and a full spectrum of treatments and surgical interventions for complicated orthopedic injuries and conditions for the hand, foot, hip, knee, shoulder and more. The practice includes orthopedic surgeons James M. Edwards, MD; Patrick R. Knight, MD; Rickey L. Lents, MD; Ryan C. Morris, DO; R. August Ritter III, MD; Brian C. Schafer, MD; Andrew C. Trueblood, MD and Khalid Waliullah, MD and physiatrists Jimmy D. Bowen, MD; and Bernard C. Burns, DO. These physicians have extensive training and years of combined experience — performing thousands of procedures, from sports medicine to hand to joint replacement and revision. Advanced Orthopedic Specialists was founded in 1934 and is the region’s premier orthopedic practice. AOS has Centers of Excellence in Joint Replacement and Sports Medicine. AOS is the official team physician for Southeast Missouri State University and countless regional high school

teams.

“We are excited to partner with Saint Francis Medical Partners,” says Rickey Lents, MD, AOS President. “We believe this will allow Advanced Orthopedic Specialists to advance and expand care to better serve our region. Our other partnerships with Saint Francis have been very successful and we feel that together we can implement a seamless continuum of orthopedic services.”

The partnership will be effective January 1, 2018, and additional information will be forthcoming. There are no immediate plans to relocate AOS and the physicians will retain their privileges at other area hospitals.

To learn more about Advanced Orthopedic Specialists, call 573-331-3996 or visit [www.sfmc.net](http://www.sfmc.net).

Saint Francis Medical Center is a 308-bed facility serving more than 713,000 people throughout Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee and Arkansas. Guided by its mission to provide a ministry of healing and wellness inspired by its Christian philosophy and values, the Medical Center has become a progressive, innovative regional tertiary care referral center. Saint Francis’ major service lines, which have received national recognition, include the Neurosciences Institute; Orthopedic Institute; Family BirthPlace, featuring the region’s first Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit; Heart Hospital; Emergency and Level III Trauma Center; Cancer Institute; and Fitness Plus.

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