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## **Carondelet Heart Institute Provides Cardiac-Specific PET Scan**

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*Kansas City, Mo.*—Heart disease is the number-one killer of men and women in the United States but early detection and proper treatment can help those with heart disease fight back.

The Carondelet Heart Institute at St. Joseph Medical Center is among the first in the area using cardiac-only positron emission tomography (PET) to get a clear view of the heart without an invasive procedure. During a PET scan, a patient is injected with a small amount of radioactive tracer. The blood stream carries the material to the heart where a special PET camera shows the material and creates a picture of the heart. It gives very detailed information about the heart's blood flow. Healthy muscle show more of the material indicating good blood flow and less-healthy areas will show less absorption.

“The latest type of PET scan is the most accurate test available for assessing the impact of cardiovascular blockages in patients who may be at risk for heart attack,” says Timothy Blackburn, MD, cardiologist with the Carondelet Heart Institute. “Not only can we easily identify damaged areas, we can also determine the extent of damage and whether the patient will benefit from angioplasty or bypass surgery. It's non-invasive, painless and we get a wealth of information.”

Dr. Blackburn says the new PET scan takes less than an hour and the amount of exposure to radiation is significantly less than earlier PET scans. In fact radiation exposure is equivalent to that of a kidney X-ray. In addition, PET images are less likely to be distorted by conditions of the patient's body, such as obesity and are consistently of high quality leading to a more accurate diagnosis in cardiac disease.

*St. Joseph Medical Center is an acute care facility of Carondelet Health (CarondeletHealth.org) which also includes St. Mary's Medical Center, three long-term care facilities and home care services. Carondelet Health is dedicated to the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. Our commitment to human dignity compels us to provide compassionate, quality healthcare for body, mind and spirit, with a special concern for the poor. We are responsible stewards serving the needs of all people from conception to death. Carondelet Health is a member of Ascension Health, the nation's largest Catholic and nonprofit health system.*