

St. Tammany Health System Pediatric Inpatient and Emergency Department Renews Certified Autism Center™ Designation

COVINGTON, LA, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- St. Tammany Health System ([STHS](#)) [Pediatric Inpatient and Emergency Department](#) proudly announces its recent recertification as a [Certified Autism Center™](#) (CAC) by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). To renew the credential, at

least 80% of the department's patient-facing staff completed up-to-date training to better support, assist, and care for every patient, especially autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and their families. Initially certified in 2020, this recertification reflects the center's steadfast dedication to providing outstanding care and support to the autism community.

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*St. Tammany Health
Foundation executive director
Nicole Suhre*

“Earning recertification as a Certified Autism Center™ is a meaningful reflection of our commitment to access – and to ensuring that every patient who walks through our doors can receive care that meets their unique needs,” says St. Tammany Health System president and CEO Joan Coffman, FACHE. “This designation speaks to the tireless work of our colleagues, who continue to build a culture of understanding, adaptability and compassion so that all patients and families feel supported throughout their care journey.”



“Our foundation has made a commitment to this community through our autism initiative. Renewal means everything when it comes to honoring that commitment,” says St. Tammany Health Foundation executive director Nicole Suhre. “Through philanthropic support, our board, staff and most importantly, our generous donors, have made it a priority to foster a culture of awareness and acceptance for patients with autism at St. Tammany Health System. The dollars

we raise fund new certifications and renewals, as well as all the additional components of care and resources that have made our organization's efforts around neurodiversity so special."

IBCCES autism and accessibility training transforms healthcare facilities from a place that merely treats patients to one that truly cares for them. By proactively removing barriers to care, facilities are able to streamline operations, reach an underserved market, deepen trust and loyalty, and establish itself as an indispensable community institution.

"We are excited to announce the renewal of St. Tammany Health System Pediatric Inpatient and Emergency Department as a Certified Autism Center™," says Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman. "This renewal reflects their commitment to staying informed on best practices and resources, as well as their dedication to ensuring every autistic and sensory-sensitive patient who visits the department feels safe, supported, and welcomed."

STHS has created sensory backpacks designed to support communication and meet the unique sensory needs of autistic individuals when visiting health system facilities. Each bag includes sensory tools and communication aids, such as a dry-erase board, visual guides to support understanding and interaction during appointments, as well as countdown cards to provide reassurance that there is an end to an exam or procedure.

The health system has also developed "what to expect" stories for autistic individuals preparing for an upcoming healthcare visit or procedure. For some, the healthcare environment can feel overwhelming or uncertain. Using written and visual cues, these social stories aim to provide a sense of preparedness, familiarity, comfort, and guidance while improving understanding when visiting STHS locations. The health system is also continuing to develop and publish new "what to expect" videos featuring different healthcare encounters across its facilities on the website.

In addition, STHS hosts annual autism awareness and acceptance activities throughout April, including the sale of a T-shirt to support autism initiatives, and new this year, autism awareness socks.

For 25 years, IBCCES has been a leader in providing autism, sensory and neurodiversity training and certification for professionals worldwide, including those in healthcare, education, public



safety, travel, and corporate sectors. As the only credentialing board offering these programs, IBCCES provides training from subject matter experts and autistic self-advocates, along with long-term support, continuous learning, onsite reviews, and renewal requirements to ensure continued growth and lasting impact.

To further support inclusivity efforts, St. Tammany Health System Pediatric Inpatient and Emergency Department is featured on the [IBCCES Accessibility App](#), which is free to download. This app provides individuals with a variety of disabilities real-time guidance on certified destinations, sensory-friendly spaces, and tailored recommendations. By connecting users to accessible locations worldwide, the app helps ensure seamless, enjoyable experiences for everyone.

IBCCES also provides access to resources such as [AccessibilityCertified.com](#) and [AutismTravel.com](#), which are free online tools for families that list certified locations and professionals. Each organization listed on the site has met IBCCES certification requirements.

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About St. Tammany Health System

The heartbeat of its community, St. Tammany Health System cares for patients and families with excellence, compassion and teamwork. It is nationally recognized for quality, safety and service excellence by CareChex, Leapfrog, Healthgrades, Hospital Compare, Women's Choice and U.S. News & World Report. The health system is home to 281-bed St. Tammany Parish Hospital Service District No. 1, three diagnostic centers, a same-day surgery center and 12 medical clinics throughout western St. Tammany Parish. Self-supporting, not-for-profit STHS is AA- rated by Fitch and receives no tax funding. More at [sttammany.health](#).

About IBCCES

Delivering the global standard for training and certification in the fields of autism, neurodiversity and accessibility – IBCCES provides a series of certification programs that empower professionals to be industry leaders and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. For 25 years, IBCCES has been a global leader, setting the industry standard in autism and cognitive differences training. IBCCES works in over 125 countries and provides training in 8 languages, and its programs have been recognized around the world as the leading benchmark in training and certification.

In addition to individual certification programs, IBCCES partners with cities, destinations and organizations on initiatives like the Certified Autism Destination™ (CAD) and Autism Certified City™ (ACC), ensuring autistic and sensory-sensitive residents and visitors feel welcomed and safe. Destinations that achieve the CAD designation have completed a specialized program that ensures a multitude of recreation, hospitality and entertainment organizations have completed an autism and sensory-sensitivity training, certification and IBCCES facilities review process. The ACC designation expands on that program and includes IBCCES training and certification for the

public safety, education, healthcare and workplace sectors.

IBCCES also created the Accessibility App, AutismTravel.com, and AccessibilityCertified.com – free resources for individuals with a variety of neurodiversities and disabilities, listing certified locations and connecting individuals to other resources and each other.

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