

## NEWS RELEASE

Nov. 6, 2006

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# University of Saint Mary To Offer Healthcare Informatics Degree Program Starting in January 2007

(Leavenworth, Kan.)— The move from paper to electronic health records and fast-paced changes in technology have accelerated the demand for technologically-savvy healthcare professionals specialized in retrieving, storing, and protecting private medical records. In response to this demand, and coinciding with National Health Information and Technology Week Nov. 5-11, the University of Saint Mary is announcing it will launch a Healthcare Informatics Bachelor's Degree program beginning Jan. 17, 2007.

Healthcare Informatics is the wave of the future, combining health care, information technology, and communications. In recent U.S. government career indexes, Allied Health and Information Technology are projected as the top two disciplines needed for health care careers in the next ten years.

USM is the only university in the Kansas City metropolitan area offering this particular undergraduate degree program. The Healthcare Informatics program will teach students to analyze, interpret, and transfer patient information, such as medical records or medical history, in order to enhance the quality of health care. With millions of pieces of personal medical information floating around, physicians can no longer expect to master all the information at their finger tips. Instead, physicians must rely on the expertise of health informaticists so they can focus on making proper diagnoses.

The Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Informatics will consist of 36 credit hours in technology core and 15 hours of non-technology courses from business and general education (in addition to all USM general education requirements). The entire program has been created to comply with all government regulations, including the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Rick Hite, chair of the Information Technology department, is heading up the Healthcare Informatics program. "As more and more baby boomers reach retirement age and as healthcare becomes more complex, the need for healthcare information management professionals is increasing. USM is poised to be a leader in this area while living our mission to serve the needs of the community."

Hite says Saint Mary will continuously adapt the program with current trends in healthcare. "In today's healthcare industry, it is imperative to have intelligent, ethical people running the 'behind the scenes' nature of healthcare. Graduates from our program will be highly marketable, and play a significant role in the changing face of healthcare and technology," he said.

To date, every student who has graduated with a degree in Information Technology from USM has a technology related job or is in graduate school furthering their education. The Healthcare Informatics program is built on the same proven core of classes.

Healthcare Informatics is the most recent addition to USM's growing list of degree programs. Just this past summer, USM added three new programs, Criminology and two online programs, an RN to BSN degree-completion program and a Certificate in Health Care Management.

Classes start Jan. 17, 2007. Visit [www.stmary.edu](http://www.stmary.edu) or call toll free 800-752-7043 for more information.

The University of Saint Mary is a private, co-educational applied liberal arts university founded by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations at 11413 Pflumm in Overland Park and inside Providence Medical Center at 8929 Parallel Parkway in Kansas City, Kan.

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