

News Release



Oct. 1-3, 2021

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2021 St. Anthony's Triathlon Weekend Cancelled

2022 Race Weekend Scheduled for April 29-May 1

ST. PETERSBURG, FL., (Aug. 27, 2021) – With the resurgence of COVID-19 throughout the Tampa Bay area and the increase in COVID hospitalizations, St. Anthony's Triathlon organizers have made the very difficult decision to cancel this year's race weekend scheduled for Oct. 1-3.

It is the second time in two years that concerns about public health have caused organizers to cancel the nationally recognized event that fills the streets of downtown St. Petersburg with athletes and spectators from around the country and around the block. The Triathlon weekend is scheduled to return in 2022 from April 29-May 1.

"Providing quality health care for our community has always been the mission of St. Anthony's Hospital, and that priority is even more clear during this pandemic," said St. Anthony's President Scott Smith. "The surge of COVID-positive patients into our hospital has increased tremendously during the past month, taxing our team members and our health care partners – emergency medical services, firefighters and police officers. We rely on those partners throughout the Triathlon weekend for their services. It would not be responsible for us to further burden those resources at this busy time."

In the past month, BayCare hospitals have seen a rapid increase in their patient count, including in COVID-19 patients, due to the spread of the highly-contagious Delta variant. BayCare is now caring for more COVID-19 patients than it did during the last peak during July 2020. Events throughout St. Anthony's and other BayCare hospitals have been postponed or cancelled during this critical time.

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Patrick McGee, Triathlon manager and race director, said he knows that all the athletes – from the pros to the weekend warriors, first-time triathletes and kids – will be disappointed. “But the health and safety of our athletes, volunteers and community is of the utmost importance,” said McGee, who has worked with the Triathlon for many years but was named manager in 2020. “I want to make sure that when we put this race on, it will be safe for everyone who attends.”

Toward that end, John Haffner, MD, St. Anthony's chief medical officer, urged everyone in the community to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine. “A vaccine is the best line of defense against serious complication from a COVID-19 infection,” Dr. Haffner said. “The vast majority of our 1,100 hospitalized COVID-19 patients at BayCare's 14 acute care hospitals are not vaccinated. Getting vaccinated, masking and social distancing are critical for the health of the community.”

Organizers are still working through the mechanics of what this year's cancellation will mean for registration, refunds and deferrals. Details for registered athletes will be posted by Wednesday, Sept. 1 on the St. Anthony's Triathlon Facebook page, [Facebook.com/StAnthonysTriathlon](https://www.facebook.com/StAnthonysTriathlon); the Triathlon website, SATriathlon.com; or the BayCare.org newsroom, [BayCare.org/Newsroom](https://www.baycare.org/newsroom).

Triathlon organizers will work with sponsors and vendors who were scheduled to be at the three-day Sports & Fitness Expo. If you have any questions, please contact us at Triathlon@BayCare.org.

For more information, please visit [RunSignup.com/Race/FL/SaintPetersburg/StAnthonys](https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/SaintPetersburg/StAnthonys).

About St. Anthony's Hospital

St. Anthony's Hospital is a 393-bed hospital founded in 1931 as a ministry of the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany and was the first faith-based hospital in Pinellas County. For more information on St. Anthony's, call **(727) 953-6993**.

About BayCare Health System

BayCare is a leading not-for-profit health care system that connects individuals and families to a wide range of services at 15 hospitals and hundreds of other convenient locations throughout the Tampa Bay and central Florida regions. Inpatient and outpatient services include acute care, primary care, imaging, laboratory, behavioral health, home care, and wellness. Our mission is to improve the health of all we serve through community-owned, health care services that set the standard for high-quality, compassionate care.