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**Masonic Medical Research Laboratory and Mohawk Valley Health System
Announce Potential Affiliation**

UTICA, NY – Representatives from the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory (MMRL) and the Mohawk Valley Health System (MVHS) today signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) – the first step in exploring an expanded partnership between the two organizations.

MVHS is currently responding to a request for application (RFA) to access \$300 million in funding from New York State to build a world-class hospital in Utica. The RFA must be submitted by January 31. MMRL and MVHS are exploring the opportunity to locate a portion of their research facility within the new hospital.

“We are thrilled about the potential for this once in a generation opportunity for collaboration between our two nationally recognized institutions,” said David F. Schneeweiss, President of the MMRL Board of Directors. “We appreciate that Governor Cuomo has recognized the value of MVHS to the Mohawk Valley with a significant investment, and hope that our partnership with MVHS will help to leverage that investment beyond the clinical floor and into the lab where cutting-edge discoveries are made.”

The construction of a new hospital provides an unparalleled opportunity to bring together the unique specialties of MMRL and MVHS, and to capitalize on each institution’s respective role in the healthcare system. The ultimate goal would be establishing an environment where MMRL scientists and researchers working behind the lab bench and MVHS clinicians working at patients’ bedsides could collaborate and create new and innovative research and clinical benefits for the Mohawk Valley and beyond.

“The signing of this MOU continues our work toward our mission to provide for excellence in healthcare for our communities,” said Scott H. Perra, FACHE, President/CEO of MVHS. “There is incredible work being done at MMRL and we are looking forward to the opportunity to

integrate that work with the clinical work at MVHS. This partnership means great things for the people of our community and throughout the country.”

Although the scope and specific details of the affiliation need to be finalized, a major highlight of the MOU is exploring the establishment of research space located within the newly constructed hospital that will allow MMRL researchers and MVHS clinical staff to collaborate in ways that were previously hindered by physical separation.

“As centers for research and medicine, MMRL and MVHS have missions and goals that complement each other. It is a great opportunity for both of these fine institutions to work together to ensure that cutting-edge research within a new state-of-the-art medical facility continues to occur for the benefit of the residents of the Mohawk Valley,” said New York State Senator Joseph A. Griffo.

“These are exactly the sorts of projects that the state should be funding,” said New York State Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi. “There are many benefits that could result from this agreement – from the immediate impact of treating patients in a new world-class facility, to the subtler opportunities of putting clinicians and researchers together in an environment where they can make new, life-saving discoveries. This project and this partnership have the potential to yield tremendous results.”

“As one of the largest employers in our county in MVHS and one of the truly hidden gems of our area in MMRL, this partnership is bringing together some of the best minds to collaborate in ways that have never happened before,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. “This is a truly exciting opportunity for the staffs of both organizations and the entire region.”

“Putting the doctors who are treating cardiac patients in the same work space as scientists and researchers studying the underlying biology and physiology of those conditions is a progressive and innovative concept which couldn’t be done without collaboration and strong partnerships,” said Utica Mayor Robert Palmieri. “I commend and thank the Mohawk Valley Health System and the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory for their great work in pursuing this worthy initiative.”

“Our community’s health is why we are proud to work with hospitals and institutions throughout Greater Utica. By working together, we can make a difference in the fight against heart disease and stroke in our area,” said Jennifer Balog, executive director, American Heart Association Utica.

As the MVHS project moves forward, the staff from MMRL and MVHS will work to finalize the details of the MOU with a more formal agreement anticipated in the coming months.

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About the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory

The Masonic Medical Research Laboratory is a not-for-profit institute founded by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in the State of New York in 1958 and is dedicated to

improving the health and quality of life for all. The Laboratory is also committed to providing education and training to basic scientists, clinical researchers and students who will perpetuate and extend the fight against disease. Please visit www.mmrl.edu to learn more.

About the Mohawk Valley Health System

MVHS is an integrated delivery system that was created in March 2014 from the affiliation of Faxton St. Luke's Healthcare (FSLH) and St. Elizabeth Medical Center (SEMC). MVHS serves the geographic area of Oneida, Herkimer and Madison counties. The MVHS Medical Group offers 19 primary care offices located throughout Oneida and Herkimer counties, a Children's Health Center, Women's Health Center and multi-specialty providers including general, orthopedic, vascular and cardiac and thoracic surgery, gastroenterology and advanced endoscopy, and neuro sciences. The Sister Rose Vincent Family Medicine Center provides patient care services and is also a teaching facility for new physicians. For more information, please visit www.mvhealthsystem.org.